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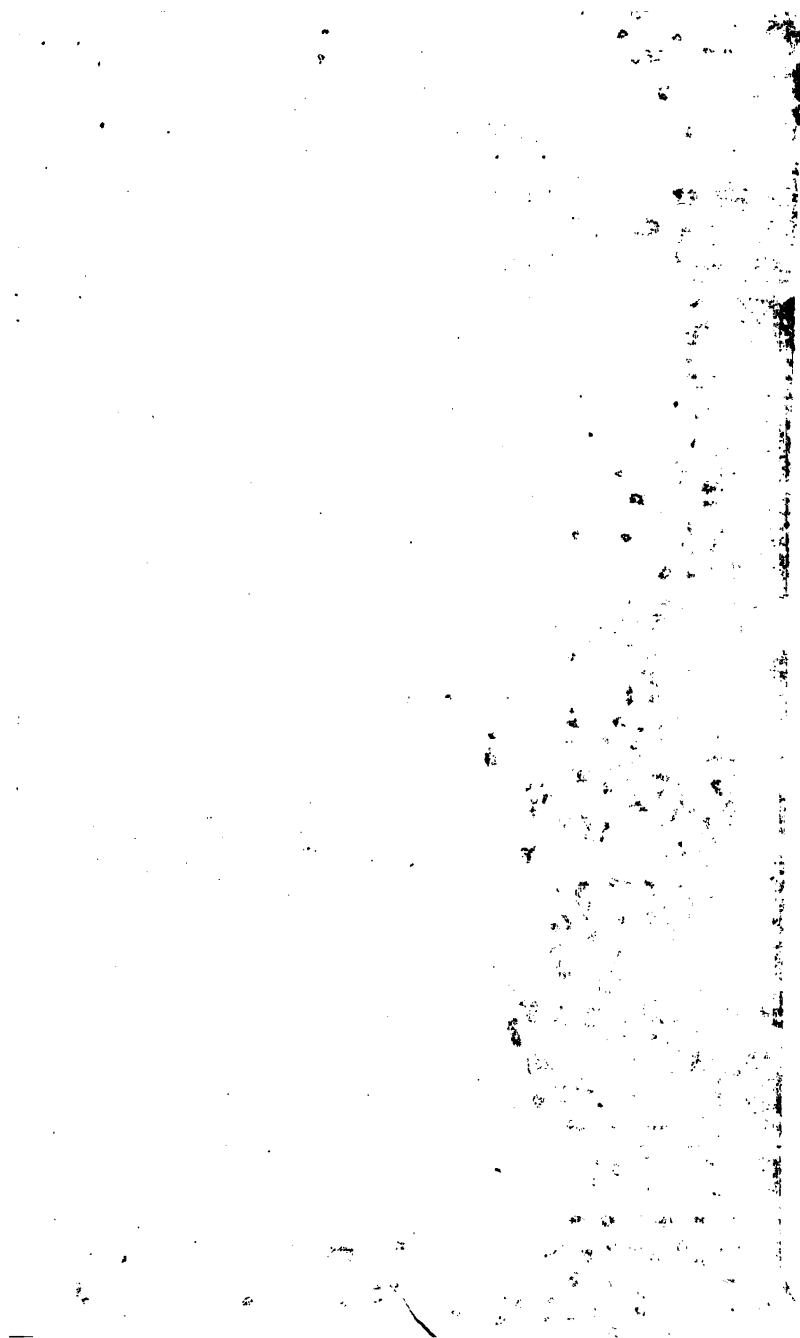


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MAN'S FOES:

Strange Tale of a Siege

BY E. H. STRAIN



THE RED-LETTER SERIES

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A MAN'S FOES

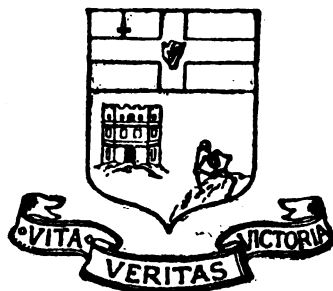


A MAN'S FOES

BY

E. H. STRAIN

"A man's foes shall be they of his own household."



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P R E F A C E .

THE main facts upon which this tale is founded are sufficiently well known ; and the writer has spared no pains to ensure truth in the details, so far as careful research and comparison of authorities enable one to arrive at it. Needless to say, there are many conflicting statements and opinions to harmonise ; but about the hardships and privations endured in Derry during the siege of 1689 all the authorities are agreed ; as well as about the splendid gallantry and constancy with which both citizens and garrison behaved throughout that trying time. The writer may say with confidence that these are in no way overcharged.

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A MAN'S FOES.

CHAPTER I.

BEGINNING, IRISH FASHION, AT THE END OF THE STORY.

STRANGE and very strange it is to reflect upon the changes that one year, one very short year with twelve little months in it, may bring forth. A foam-bell on a stormy sea, were it endowed with sense and memory, might have some such experiences as ours to recall at the end of its day of life. Now on the crest of the wave, now in the trough; now sliding up the slope of the tossing water, now sliding down; now sparkling in a flying ray of sunshine, now dark in the sudden gloom; whelmed under the plunging wave one moment, the next slipping into the free light once more, and in the next after that whirled, perhaps, clean into the air by the wind. The likeness is apt enough between such an existence as this and the life we have been leading for the last twelve months.

A year; and that of the shortest, as it seems when I look back upon it; and yet what long days have been therein—days that seemed to hold months of ordinary life; yes, and that will count for more in our lives than months of ordinary life. Perhaps it needed more than the strength that will carry one through months of quietness to live through one such day; perhaps our lives have been shortened by just so much. And yet, could the choice be allowed one, to have been in the thick of the fight or quite out of it—a foam-bell on the crest of the wave, or a foam-bell on the eddy of a sheltered brook, where hardly even the sound of the storm can reach it—would one choose the calm? I would not,

woman though I be; for such days as these were filled—ay, to overflowing—with real life; it was worth living to have the chance of such. And that which hath been done is worth the casting away of a dozen lives, if one had them; how mean and inglorious seems the common round of daily business after the fate of a nation hath hung upon our actions! And yet how sweet and gracious is the orderly succession of daily duties, tame and trivial though they be. It doth seem to me that I never so much enjoyed the rarest junketing and holiday-making before our troubles, as I now do the ordering of my family and the arranging of my house. Interruption and derangement do give a new zest to everyday interests, that is certain; as that little foam-bell might be figured, after its day of storm, to find blessed rest in the calm that had only wearied it before.

I said something like this to Margery, my maid, who came into my chamber as I sat with paper and ink before me, ready to begin to write.

"Our storm left much wreckage behind it, and caused much devastation," said I. "But the wreckage is well-nigh cleared away, and soon the havoc will all be repaired. Even the very gray hairs, which you were so grieved to see in my head, will soon disappear, I think."

I spoke something gaily, for Margery doth keep so grave a face that I am sorry for her; nor doth it indicate a right sense of all the mercies of Providence towards us. If we have suffered, have we not been richly repaid?

She came up to me before she answered, and pushed back my hair, looking to see if that which I had said were true.

"I should not wonder, madam," said she. "Peace and happiness work wonders."

"Peace and happiness would almost seem to make the years run backwards, wouldn't they?" said I. "What haggard old, grief-stricken creatures we seemed, both you and I, when we came back to Clonccally three months ago! And yet now, though no doubt we have lost much that we shall never regain, we don't seem to have lost our youth, after all; for that is coming back to us."

"You may get back your round cheeks and your pretty colour, madam," said Margery; "and even your hair may come back to what it was—who knows? but your eyes will never be what they were—never. They used to sparkle like the sun on the lough,"

said this foolish woman, who used to think far too highly of my looks, and now doth think far too highly of me. "And now," says she, "they're not the eyes of a young woman at all."

"What," said I, "are they so spoilt as that?" And being, I fear, for all we have come through, but a vain woman still, I bade her give me from my table a little mirror, that I might look at them. Then I said: "I don't think they look so wonderfully old, Margery, after all. I believe they could sparkle yet, if ye were to try a bit of flattery." For I wanted to get a smile from her.

"Ah, they're a bit sunken," said she; "but it's not that. 'Tis the years that are to come that one can see in them, more than the years that are past! There's a look in them now," says she, beginning to shed tears, "that I'll know you by in heaven, when I see you there; faith, madam, 'tis not age you have in your eyes, but immortality."

"There, there, now, Margery! you've fairly beat yourself at praising me," said I, trying to make a joke of it, but 'twas of no use. She cried, and I cried too—partly from sympathy, and partly because even my waiting-woman, with all her partiality, could not help showing me that mine eyes were no longer as pretty as they once were.

"In truth," I said through the shower, "our immortality was very near us in those last days of the siege, wasn't it? Our hearts were so full of it that we could not keep it all out of our faces; though death," said I by an afterthought, "put his sign-manual there as well, to witness his prior claim."

"'Twas the thing that kept us living, the thought of our immortality," said Margery.

"And it was pretty near all we had to live on!" I could not help rejoicing, though I know that Margery hates flippancy. She is no longer like a servant to me; nor was she formerly a mere ordinary servant, being a connection, though a poor and very distant one, of my husband's family. But when mistress and maid have passed together through such perils and privations as have happened to us, there is thenceforward a bond of friendship between them, as well as of service rendered and received. Therefore I drew Margery's face down to mine and gave her a little kiss of peace before I sent her out of my chamber, to give me solitude for my writing. It hath ever been a tendency of mine to give to serious matters a streak, as it were, of a smile; and whether it

be innocent and rather praiseworthy than evil (as making them bear less heavily on the spirits), or altogether a snare, I have never been able rightly to make up my mind. But even in the depths of our troubles there were times when I could not quite govern my tongue into seriousness; but now and then a saying that had the savour of a jest would escape me in my own despite.

At the first, when we came back into this our house at Clonally, and were here established, I was all eagerness to begin the writing down of my remembrances; yet now there have passed nigh upon three months, and to-night is the first time that I have taken pen in hand for that purpose. To be sure, there hath been much to see to, much to set in order; for our house, though it was not altogether dismantled, like so many that neighbour it, had yet suffered severely by the occupation of the enemy, having had a garrison of them posted therein. And what such house-keepers as these were like to make of their abode, sure anybody can tell well enough, without description from me. Oh, my pretty withdrawing-room, with its chairs of tapestry-work, wrought by the hands of my dear mother and aunts; with the spinet and the beautiful Italian cabinet that Captain Hamilton caused to be brought from London, all the way, to adorn our home withal; not to mention the gewgaws and chaney that his mother gave us! What a state it was in when I came back to it out of Derry! The costly hangings of Italian silk, that were a present from my lord Duke, my husband's kinsman and friend, sent to us from his palace in Scotland, I had fortunately saved, taking them with me among my mails when we removed into the city before the siege. But the floor that was the pride of Margery's heart for its shining (which to maintain cost the maids so much hard rubbing with the cicely seeds from the river-bank)—'twas of the same colour as the road to the waterside of Derry, and not a whit brighter; and the staircase of polished oak was in the same condition. Throughout the house everything was in like case, as was to be expected; but the rest of the furniture, being more solid than that in my closet, it hath suffered less actual damage, and is now restored to something like its former state. My pretty silk hangings are once more in their old places; many of the other things have been repaired marvellous neatly; some pieces even of the chaney have been found, and Margery hath mended them with a mysterious stuff that she makes from the pounded lime of shells, mixed with the white of an egg, and I know not what else. They will scarce bear

handling, but they stand in their old places. Everywhere, to be sure, there are scars and scratches—you can see them when you look for them—nor would I wish to be rid of them entirely, they being, as it were, a kind of written history. But to a casual eye the house appears but little different from what it was a year ago—on the day, to wit, that my Lord Mountjoy came to it with my husband out of Derry, to sup here and lie all night, on his way to Dublin.

Whenever I find myself disposed to murmur at the destruction that hath been wrought in my house, I have nothing more to do than to think of the case of so many of our neighbours, whose houses are for the most part either burnt down or sacked to the bare walls. By what means ours escaped the like treatment I do not know. 'Tis true that a person of very great consideration was quartered here for a time—no less than the French Ambassador himself. But since I have heard the very headquarter residence itself—Sir Matthew Bridge's house of Brookhall, to wit—was razed to the ground by the Irish army at its leaving, I well perceive that this cannot have been the reason it was spared. And, indeed, from all I can learn of Monsieur le Comte d'Avaux, he is one much more like to have counselled the destruction of any place that might harbour us, and even urged it, than to have said a word in favour of leaving it standing, he counting all that have borne arms against King James the enemies of King Louis as well. Howsoever the marvel is to be explained, it is a truth that we have a roof to cover us, and under it no small share of the conveniences of life, and when I hear murmuring from any of my people, I spare not to point them to numbers of poor neighbours who are every day at our door imploring succour, persons that were every one of them in the possession of a good competency before the war. No doubt their losses will be all made up to them ere long, and more, for none can doubt that their Majesties King William and Queen Mary (God bless them!) have the will to be not only just but generous, as witness his Majesty's gracious letter that was read in the Diamond of Derry in the early days of the month of September. But in the meantime they suffer much hardship and many privations; and it is much my will to be very sparing in our own proper outlays, that so we may have the more power to give them relief. Having come together through so great rigour and straitness, sure 'tis a pleasure at one's very heart to share prosperity with them that were our fellow-sufferers.

It is indeed one of my dearest blessings that I have the where-withal to be serviceable to these poor friends; nor should I have had so much had I not plucked up a spirit to withstand Major-General Kirke, our very tardy deliverer, in his exactions. For as soon as he had fairly succoured Derry—that I should ascribe it to him, who, for aught that hath appeared, had more the will to look on at its destruction than to make any honest endeavour to relieve it!—no sooner, at any rate, was the city relieved, than the Major-General sent parties of soldiers in all directions to seize the cattle and sheep that remained to the country people, upon the pretence that they were the abandoned booty of the enemy. Why he did a thing so tyrannous none can say, save that it hath ever been his wont to pillage upon any pretext or none. To be sure, he brought great plenty into Derry. Perhaps he thought that in the sudden abundance the people might forget the famine that had there been endured so lately, mainly through his tardiness. If this was his reason, he had better have left it alone, for the common people throughout all the district have been reduced to such extremity thereby, that now they say that King James's soldiers are better neighbours by far than King William's. And the welfare of the province had been so undermined that, now that all he gathered together hath been consumed in the city, there is but little in the country that can be brought into market, so that there is again a scarcity, not in the city only, but in the country as well. And thus for every good word that Kirke got in Derry in the time of plenty, he now gets ten hard ones in the city, and an hundred in the country. And that is much more his due, as I think, than praise for anything he hath ever done here in Ireland.

In due course, as was to be looked for, these legalised marauders came to my house at Cloncall, where there was, one way and another, a considerable number of cattle. When we were forced to go into Derry before the siege, we left our stock in the charge of some known dependents and tenants, who chose rather to remain without the city and take protection from the enemy. Much of our young cattle we sent away into the hill-country, where they still are; but as soon as we were known to be at home again, those that had the charge of our cattle sent them back—such of them, at least, as the enemy had spared to seize. Thus we had a goodly number both of cattle and sheep when General Kirke's marauders came our way.

I could not imagine what there was to do that morning, what

with the lowing of bestial and shouting of men in the courtyard without, and the tumult of voices within the house. I was still in my chamber, not having finished dressing, and Margery was with me; so I sent her to bring me some account of the noise. She had scarce had time, as I thought, to reach the kitchen, when she was back again, bringing with her Jenny Hunter, the dairymaid—a woman that hath her full share of sense and faculty, as she hath more than once shown. She had been waiting my convenience in the kitchen for some time, as she told me. I promise you I quickly gave orders that will hinder the like from happening again. The convenience of a mistress is a thing that may well give way to the welfare of her household.

Poor Jenny, between rage and fright, had quite lost the power to make herself understood. She began a jumbled lament about the English soldiers, and Polly and Biddy, and Nelly and Rosy, that told me nothing at all. I made her sit down, even in my presence, assuring her that things could not be so bad but that something might be done to mend them, would she but collect herself and tell me clearly what was amiss.

"Auch, madam, the beautiful cattle!" said she; "sure we'll niver see them again, and them beginning to be fat and nice again. Auch, and two of them in full milk, too, when milk's so scarce, goin' to be sold for beef at a penny a pound in Derry!"

And at that she broke out once more into sobbing and crying, so that I could make nothing of her at all.

"Jenny, Jenny," said I, "something has certainly muddled your wits this morning. What is it? Can't ye tell me plainly what's wrong! I'm not going to sell my cows, either at a penny a pound or a shilling a pound, so make your mind easy."

"Sell them, madam! No, indade," said she. "It's not yourself that'll have the chance either to sell them or to kape them. There's about a score of English soldiers gatherin' them into droves even now, to drive them into Derry for beef to the town."

"Nonsense!" said I; "that can't be true, for I've received no letter of requisition; and if I had, there are young beasts enough to send without killing our milk kine."

"'Tis even too true, madam," said Margery, who had been down again to gather news, seeing how unfit Jenny was to tell them—" 'tis even too true," quoth she. "There's a party of the English soldiers below in the yard that say they have

General Kirke's orders to bring away all the live stock they can lay hands on, pretending that 'tis all the booty of the Irish army, and must therefore be the spoil of the conquerors."

At this I bethought me that Colonel Mitchelburne, our late military commander in Derry, would be aware if this was within the right of our defenders, as they scrupled not to call themselves. The Colonel lay at Cloncalla that night—'twas shortly before his departure for England—and I sent Margery to desire he would favour me with a minute's conversation as quick as might be; and that he did, being with me in a very few moments. Jenny by this time had got back her senses, and was able to tell him all that had occurred. He straightway assured me that Kirke had no right—save the right of the strong hand—to take from me a horn or a hoof that was my husband's, save upon clear necessity shown, and then to give me his bill of indebtedness for all that was taken without payment made.

Upon that assurance I was for hastening straight to the courtyard to expostulate with the officer commanding the foraging party; but Margery would have me delay till she brought me the hood and negligée that I wear when I go abroad in the mornings.

"For if you will speak to these rude men," said she, "sure you must not either be flustered nor appear to be in haste, but show the same authority that you have among your own servants."

It chafed me to be hindered, even for a moment; but I have thought since that it was she was the wise one that time, not I. It is certain that a woman can do nothing to put herself at greater disadvantage in treating with men than to show any discomposure of manner, or any appearance of contending with them. If she be dignified and quiet, and show no doubt of their desire to serve her, they will scarce fail to show her that courtesy which is her due; such, at least, hath been my experience. But in my sudden heat of indignation, thinking that in my husband's necessary absence they were about to plunder him and me (for, having heard nothing of the exactions practised on my neighbours, truly I thought this to be a case by itself), I felt in myself the spirit to have chidden the armed soldiers like naughty children; and had done it, too, but for Margery, and thereby, no doubt, lost much.

My composure, thus assumed with my hood and negligée, was nigh to failing me when I saw my milch cows from the farmyard, and the young cattle and stock from the pasture, driven pell-mell into the courtyard, huddled and hustled together into droves, in

preparation for being driven away altogether. My heart came into my very throat to think how it had fared with me and with all of us had I been timid and diffident of opposing mine own will to the will of others, as women are for the most part, and as I myself used to be. Then had I certainly stood still, with indignation burning in my heart and in mine eyes, no doubt, but with never a word to say to hinder them from stripping me of what I had to support my family and household withal, and that without reason given or payment so much as promised. But since my marriage my husband's frequent absences from home have forced me to acquire the habit of governing his people; thus I felt my duty, and knew my right, to require a reason for these arbitrary measures. As to the military dress and arms, they awed me not at all. Six months' experience of the like in Derry had shown me for certain that they covered flesh and blood much similar to those of ordinary men.

I therefore called to me one of the soldiers that was nearest, bidding him desire his commanding officer to speak with me, and presently there came to me a man gray-headed and weather-beaten, that had neither the bearing nor seeming that belonged to one that held his Majesty's commission; nor did he, being but a corporal.

Such were the persons empowered by Kirke to deprive us at their will of our substance. Sure there were men even in King James's army that had thought it their duty to show greater care of the well-being of conquered enemies, let alone their loyal fellow-subjects that they were sent to protect. But I am bound to say for this man that he treated me with all respect.

I asked him of his errand—whether it were for the service of the garrison at Derry he was collecting my cattle, to which he answered "Yes." Then I desired him that he would serve me with the letter, stating how many cattle I was asked to provide them withal, and upon whose authority the requisition was made.

At that he seemed something confused, but made answer presently that he brought no such paper as I spoke of.

"But," said he, "it is by the orders and authority of Major-General Kirke, military Governor of Londonderry, that I take possession of the cattle."

"Then," said I to him, "tell me how many cattle he hath bidden you to require of me, and I will order mine own people to

choose them and deliver them to you, you giving me, of course, your receipt for the same."

The man seemed yet more taken aback than at the first.

"Madam," said he, after muttering something to himself that was not meant for mine ears, "I am not required by my orders to give receipts for the cattle I collect, nor is there a number appointed me to ask. It hath come to the ears of the General," said he, gathering assurance, "that all the cattle in these parts is nothing but the stock that was abandoned by the Irish army in its retreat, which the country people have taken for their own use, a thing that can by no means be permitted, for by all the rules of war the booty of a routed army belongs to the conquerors. The General hath therefore sent us out to bring it in."

The man tried to speak roundly, but was let by his conscience; for well he knew the falsehood of that which, as he said, had been told to the General. I answered him very quietly.

"Then the General is misinformed," said I. "For there is not an animal you see here but is the undoubted property of Captain Hamilton, my husband. They were all bestowed in safe keeping while the Jacobite army was here, as can be proved by many witnesses. Any one that knows Mr. Hamilton—and there are enough of his acquaintances in Derry," said I, "to speak to his reputation—will tell General Kirke whether we are like to refuse anything we have that is required for the public service, so it be duly asked of us and the need for it shown. But this is illegal exaction, and I leave it to yourself to say if I should submit to it."

I finished in my very gentlest voice, which was none so easy for me to compass, for ever and anon there came a sound into it, in my own despite, that was pure defiance, and even to mine own ear said plainly, "Do it if you dare!" But I fought against this with all my might, for it is not the way to succeed with men that have weapons in their hands, to dare them to the thing they have a mind to do.

The corporal looked at me, and then at the cattle, and last of all he looked at his boots. He seemed to be suffering an extremity of discomfort. At the last he said:

"This is all very well for you, madam, but I hardly know how it will sound in the General's ears, that a party sent by him to bring in cattle have left the best lot—Gad! by very much the best lot—they have come across, at the bidding of a lady."

"You had better consider likewise," said I very calmly, but in spite of myself my voice sounded something stern, "how it will sound in King William's ears that his liege subjects, so lately dwelling in the very shadow of death for his service, have been violently deprived of their substance without so much as a plea of necessity made."

"Yes, yes, madam," said the man, looking up upon a sudden; "this is all very well—very well indeed. Ye say the cattle are all yours, and no doubt so you think. But how," says he, "am I to know that it's true?"

This was putting me into a corner, as one might say, for, indeed, I knew not how to prove that these identical animals were our own, though of the number returned by each person that had charge of a parcel of them I could easily have rendered an exact account; and sure the tally he might have made out for himself well enough. But here spoke up Jenny Hunter, who, seeing me so composed, had grown composed herself.

"Sure," said she to him, "an' you'll have the kindness to bid them red-coats leave alone the milch cows, I'll soon let you see if they're our own, anyway."

Then she began to call to them in the outlandish jargon that she doth use to bring them to her out of the field, the creatures raising and turning their heads forthwith, as those that knew the call. Then, they being no longer restrained and threatened of the soldiers, she called to each by its name, and as she called they came to her one by one, save that the last of them grew impatient, and ran to her all at once, not waiting to be called.

"Will ye open the door of the byre, Teddy?" she said then to a man of ours that was near her.

And he set it open. Then she began another chant, as barbarous as the first; but at the sound of it, the animals, understanding it, filed orderly and quiet into the byre, each taking her own place and standing there ready to be fastened up for the milking.

"Will that content ye, ye reaving ruffians?" said she, which insult might easily have undone the good effect of my gentleness, had they perfectly understood it.

Then Teddy stepped up, and said that he thought that some of the young cattle he had tended might follow his voice, if I pleased he should try. But the corporal declared himself satisfied. Therefore, as I judged it well to have his good word with General

Kirke, I sent him into the kitchen to break his fast; for the men I gave orders that something should be brought to them where they were. Teddy spoke up before them all, and told me that five or six young animals had been sent away under the charge of two troopers before I came out into the yard. I cared not to press for the restitution of these, lest by trying for over-much I should lose all. I made Master Corporal Simkins (for that was the name of him) give me his receipt for them, however, Cargill, my servant, writing both the paper and the corporal's name, as he could not do so much for himself; and he making his mark, which was duly attested by two witnesses. This paper, though I still possess it, hath never brought me in a penny as yet; nor do I care to press that either, being well content to postpone mine own just claims to those of others, my neighbours, who have been bereft of all their substance, or near it.

I shall scarce get me to the siege, I fear, if I spend so much time in telling beforehand what hath come after it, which is, as they say in this part of the country, but an Irish way of making a beginning. But I cannot forbear to relate how I found the Colonel and Margery ensconced beneath the little window that gives light to the passage into the kitchen, whence they had listened to every word that had been said; and had taken a peep from time to time, as they judged it safe, at what was passing in the yard. The Colonel had his pistols loaded and laid ready to his hand, and had not hesitated to interpose therewith on my behalf, had he thought the men likely to molest me. It was fortunate on all accounts that this was unnecessary.

If praise could have made me forget my inward tremors of rage and defiance, and the pain I had to keep them under in my speech, I had it in plenty; they went about to puff me up like a wind-bag with their flattery, Colonel Mitchelburne and Margery. 'Twas something, no doubt, to be assured that whatever my feelings were my conduct was what it should be—the effect also was what I desired—yet to Jenny Hunter was due no small part of the credit of this, for, certes, without her I had made but a poor demonstration of my ownership of the cattle, and Margery's good thought of the hood and negligée should not be forgotten. I told her so, and rallied her, saying that her praise of me was but a bait put forth to catch praise for her own wisdom.

"Faith, madam, an' you will say so," quoth she, dropping her demure curtesy, "I will say that none of us has any credit at all

in the matter, but only the morning air and the vexation that hath put a colour into your cheeks that's like their own. Ah," says she, "I'd be well enough pleased to have a visit from the soldiers every morning if that might keep you looking so like yourself."

"Peace, silly!" said I. "Don't make me blush for your folly, before the Colonel, too."

"I'm sure he'll bear me out in it," said Margery, all of a sudden run mad, as it seemed. "Send but now for that corporal, madam, and I warrant he'll offer to send an express after the cattle that are halfway to Derry by this time if you ask him."

"I like not this fooling, Margery," said I to her, a little ruffled; and at that she held her peace.

But as to the colour she spoke of, it had not quite left my faded cheeks when I went to my chamber after breakfast, and could see myself in the glass. I was fool enough and vain enough to rejoice thereat, though I spared not to rate Margery for the liberty she had given to her tongue when the Colonel had left us in the afternoon.

He rid to Glendernmot that same day, at my special request, which I made because I feared that it might come to the ears of Kirke that he had been at Cloncall when I had withstood his messengers. He might then have given it such a colour as to make it appear that the Colonel had influenced me in what I did, and this, no doubt, had been to his disadvantage (that had disadvantage enough without it), to appear as one in open opposition to his successor. Military governor and civil likewise—for Mr. Walker was gone to London, and Kirke had stepped into his shoes as well as Colonel Mitchelburne's—there was none to come between him and the victims of his rapacity. These were we; it was as his prey he viewed us, and not as faithful subjects put into his ward for our own benefit. Or if he thought otherwise, then did his conduct very much belie him.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE LORD VISCOUNT MOUNTJOY LAY AT CLONCALLY ON HIS WAY TO DUBLIN.

I BEGAN this narrative of our troubles by reflecting on this strange thing—that where circumstances seem most ordered and stable around us, as if they might go on in their customary round till the end of time, then on a sudden comes a change, and after that change upon change succeeds, so that, could we but have foreseen the turmoil, our very wits had been turned topsyturvy with thinking of it. Here is another strange thing, now, when one thinks upon it—that there is not in our hearts the least inkling of what is coming upon us. One might think that we men might have an inner warning of the storm, as beasts and birds perceive the approach of the thunder before the tempest bursts about their ears—nay, the very daisies in the grass and the yellow pilewort under the hedge do know to shut themselves against the coming of a shower. But it is not so with man.

Sure, there was not another woman in Ulster busier than I, nor happier in what she was about, on the very day when the first tiny cloud came up on our horizon; not near so big as a man's hand, it seemed, but rather like a fleck of sunshine made visible, or like to one of those gold and scarlet specks that the sun doth leave in the sky after his setting on the clearest evenings of summer. When the prophet sent his servant to scan the sky the first time, I wonder if there was upon the face of it such another little golden cloud, not to be known of such a messenger for what it was because of the brightness it was steeped in. Had Elijah gone himself to look, would even he have recognised the herald of abundance of rain, I wonder? Or would he, too, have been

deceived until it gathered blackness, though still so small and so far off? We are but purblind poor creatures, we mortals; and as for the gift of prophecy, it hath departed out of the world.

It was the visit of my Lord Mountjoy to Cloncallly that was the harbinger of evil, though at the time it seemed nothing else than a pleasure and an honour. Nay, it seemed not only, but so it undoubtedly was, that my husband's commanding officer should grace our poor house with his presence; not but that Mr. Hamilton can count among his kinsfolk men as great as he, and greater—and these none so distant kinsmen, neither—but that doth nothing lessen the courtesy my Lord Viscount did us in becoming our guest—a courtesy I rated very high, and much desired to show my sense of it in his entertainment.

To this end I busied myself, as I said but a moment ago, not leaving Margery to arrange all matters, as she commonly doth, but seeing to things myself; it was scarce needful, yet it was pleasant to me, and, in truth, there was enough for every one to do to have all things in the readiness that I thought fit for my Lord Viscount and his company. He could scarce expect, in the house of a simple gentleman, that state to which he is accustomed; but I desired he should lack nothing either of comfort or of observance. We have no pretension to entertain with magnificence, like greater folk, but in our own degree we might hope to compass completeness; and so, indeed, I believe we did. 'Tis ever a matter of carefulness with me that my husband be not ashamed in his household, but the contrary; the more especially that he took me from a family lower in station than his own.

At last everything was ready, both above stairs and below; nothing more remained to be seen to, unless I should have stood over the cook as she over her spits and stewpans. The sun had come out sweetly after a morning that was raw and cloudy, though seasonable, for sure in October we must expect such weather, and this was the twentieth of October last, a year ago and a week to the very day. Dear! how clear that day doth stand out in my memory, in spite of all that hath come and gone since then; as clear as though the week alone had passed, and the year were clean blotted out and gone.

Wamphray's wife, my dear sister Rosa (though sister by marriage and not by blood), was with me, she having ridden out to Derry with her little son James and his nursemaid to pass a week at Cloncallly; and I proposed to her that, having an hour to spare,

we should walk as far as to the garden, a thing which she was nothing loath to do. For in the whole county there was no other garden like ours as it was then, before King James's soldiers had made havoc of it; such lilies, late and early, such cowslips of all kinds and colours, such pansies, such gilliflowers, such roses in their season, and such good vegetables and fruits into the bargain. 'Twas the pride of the heart of Rabbie Wilson, the old Scotch gardener, that learned his trade in Scotland, in the gardens of my Lord of Hamilton, but hath been at Clonccally longer than any of us, longer even than Captain Hamilton, whom he can remember in his boyish days. Rabbie is but a simple man, one that pretends to nothing beyond his station, yet there are few things pertaining to the management of a garden that he is ignorant of; and, if he had but the learning, I am sure he hath the knowledge to make as good a book on the subject as Master Parkinson's "Paradise."

Rosa and I walked through the most of the garden before ever we cast eyes on him, however; at the last we caught sight of him upon his knees, in the midst of a patch of new-turned earth, just where the ground begins to slope towards the wilderness that abuts upon the river. He lifted his head and gave us a look that scarce seemed of welcome, but loosed his apron that he wore, and came towards us forthwith; and when I asked him what he was a-doing, he began to explain that he was setting some shoots of strawberry of a rare and fine kind, newly brought from the plantations in Virginia.

"Suckers," said he, "that were sent me but yesterday frae the Duke's gardener, Master Anderson. He says they're grand fruit, twice as big as the common sort, or maybe mair; so I'm gi'en them every chance, the best o' the sun an' the best o' the soil. I'd be laith to fa' short o' Master Anderson's weight frae the same number o' plants, gin the bearin'-time comes. But what's your leddyship's wull?" for it is as "my ladyship" that Rabbie persists in addressing me. "Is there aucht wantit for the hoose? Margery's been at me a dizzen times the day, an' a hale clamjamfray o' lasses oot o' the kitchen as weel, no to mention Annot herself, that should ken better. It's 'Rabbie, hae ye on'y chives?' the noo, an' 'Rabbie, hae ye on'y chervil?' the next time. Dod, but 'twould save a heap o' fash if they'd tak' a thoct an inch or twa ayont their noses, an' no come taiglin' me ance errant ilka errant."

Here was a well-ordered tongue, forsooth, in an ancient good

servant; but the truth is that Rabbie, like Margery, is a privileged person. Thus, instead of taking him to task for his overfreedom, I found me presently craving his patience for Margery and the maidens, and Annot his wife, as if it had lain in his mouth to chide any of them but the last.

"You must even forgive them, Rabbie, this morning," said I. "It's not every day we have a great company of lords and baronets and such-like grand folks to sup at Cloncall; " for, indeed, I had bidden a goodly company of our neighbours to supper to meet my Lord Mountjoy. "'Tis no more than nature that they should be something carried away by it."

"Like enench, like enench," muttered the old man. "A pack o' hellicat hizzies, when a's said, saving your leddyship's presence. But what's your wull wi' me?" asked he, with a backward glance, in his own despite, as it were, at his strawberry plants.

"Ah, Rabbie," said I to him, "I see well that you desire I should know that I have hindered your work as well as the maid-servants."

"Na, na!" said the old man quickly. "Fient a 'hait! it's aye a plesure to ser' yoursel'. No but I'd hae likit to finish the settin' while my han' was in it, an' sic a fine sappy day for the purpose," finished he, compelled by his obstinate honesty, which a little irks me, even while I respect it.

But I forgave him presently when he was cutting for me, with a liberal hand, the best of the flowers the season had left him: the late gillyflowers, the marigolds, the hollyhocks, and bunches of those wonderful pink roses that he hath, that bloom both early in the year and late; an armful of sweets. At last we had as many as we could carry; we took them within doors, and filled with them both bowls and beau-pots, which we took and set in the withdrawing-room, and likewise in the hall windows. How sweet they smelt when we had placed them, clean smothering the savour of the confection of rose-leaves that I used to keep in all my rooms for its fragrance! Presently after that it was time for us to dress, ready to receive my guests; and, truly, we had but barely finished when the first of them arrived—Adam Murray, my cousin, who had not done answering our questions about the good folks at Glendermot, when I had warning from my heart of Captain Hamilton's approach. I am often so when one that I love dearly is near me; some inner sense doth give me knowledge of his presence before the bodily ear can hear him, or the bodily eye

espy him. But the sound of the horses' feet was clear enough to any ear but a deaf one by the time we got to the door, and in another minute they came in sight—five of them. There was but just time to cast a glance right and left to see that all were in their places—the grooms to take the horses, Cargill and Margery behind myself—before they were with us, riding up to the door at a swinging trot. Then came the bustle of dismounting; Cargill running to hold his master's stirrup, as in duty bound, who was off his horse without waiting for any aid, and hastening to render the like courtesy to my Lord Mountjoy; which was his bounden duty likewise, both as a host to his guest and as a soldier to his superior officer. But my lord himself was off his horse in the twinkling of an eye, and came up to me with his beaver in his hand, greeting me by the name of the Rose of Derry, which is a foolish title that the young men of the town bestowed upon me long ago, before my marriage. I felt my face redden as I smiled.

"Ah, my lord," said I, "'tis a long time since I have heard that old name, and it brings me in mind of old times. But here is a lady that's able to deprive me both of the style and title, having a baptismal right to them, as well as one plainly to be seen in her face. Will your lordship permit me to present you to my sister, Mrs. Murray?"

Lord Mountjoy bowed twice very low; but he must ever have his answer.

"Faith, madam," said he, "she shall have her own style and title, and none of yours; for 'twere more like her if her godfather and godmothers at her baptism had named her the Lily. She shall be called the Lily of the Valley, and you shall still be the Rose of Derry."

My sister upon this pretty speech took a tint so exquisite, as she greeted him, that I marvel he did not revoke his words the next instant after they were uttered. But I, leaving him to greet Adam Murray, whom he knew, turned to welcome the other gentlemen; my husband last of all, which, though it be but ordinary courtesy, and the behaviour of any well-nurtured woman, is sure a piece of manners most irksome and unnatural to practise.

In a very short time after that I had my hands full enough, receiving my guests and making them welcome. My Lord Massacreene was next, with Mr. Skeffington, his son, still in mourning both of them for my lady, that died last year; and after them my Lady Hamilton, my husband's aunt, whom I was most happy to

see—she came, as I afterwards understood, in her great state carriage, with her two gentlemen pages, that waited on her during supper. The order in which the rest of the guests arrived I now forget, and sure 'tis no great matter ; but all were assembled, and I in the instant expectation that supper should be announced, when Cargill came something mysteriously into the room. Indeed, being sure that he was about to say "Madam is served," I had actually risen from my chair to give the signal, when something in his face checked me. It passed through my mind that some disaster had befallen the supper, and, I promise you, it was no pleasant thought to a woman that was ambitious to be thought notable in her degree. But that which Cargill came to tell me of was no disaster, but merely the arrival of another guest—one that had not been invited. It was Master Micaiah Browning, the brother of my sweet Rosa Murray, a sea-captain to his trade. I had met this gentleman but two or three times, for all he was brother to my brother's wife ; to be sure, though a person of condition and breeding, he is scarce of Captain Hamilton's standing, nor even of my brother's. Rosa, for all her beauty, comes of no great family, though of one that is good enough. But, like myself, she hath married above her own degree ; though certainly so gracious and lovely a creature might have wed with a king, and conferred a new grace upon his crown.

Little as I knew of her brother, I knew him for a gentleman that was equal to any company ; in truth, I had been greatly struck with his manner, which had Rosa's winning dignity, mixed with an air of absolute command that was all his own ; and that I a little wondered to see, knowing that he had held no greater office than the command of a vessel, and that not even in the navy. Cargill told me that Captain Browning made some scruple about joining us, being only in an ordinary riding dress ; but I quickly sent Captain Hamilton to persuade him to put that scruple out of his mind.

"Tell him," said I, "that his sister is in such perfect looks to-night that no one will look past her face at the clothes of any one else."

"It's not the case !" said he in mine ear, being still very much my lover, as I pray God he may never lose the pretty trick. "It's not the case ; there's somebody else fixes my eyes, at any rate, and hath her full share of admiration from all the rest."

"Ah, then," said I, "they have to look at their hostess, out of mere manners."

"Madam," says he, with his low bow, "sure 'tis partly a pleasure, judging by myself," and then went straight to do mine errand to Mr. Browning, none having heard a word of what had passed save we ourselves, so great by this time was the buzz of talk become.

Presently I saw him re-enter the room, bringing Mr. Browning with him ; they came but slowly towards me, the room being so crowded. Thus it came about that I was struck anew with the perfection of his manners, and this in the midst of that company, which, sure, was far beyond any he could be accustomed to. Yet, as Captain Hamilton presented him to some of the greatest persons present, which he could not help, when they made way for them to pass, any one regarding had certainly said that here was the great man—the guest of the evening. It was, in part, no doubt, his assured calmness that gave him such an air of greatness ; yet there was no arrogance in it, only a power and stateliness that would not have misbecome a prince among his subjects. He had a habit, too, of looking a man straight and considerably in the eyes, that some found disconcerting. Colonel Lundy, in especial, my Lord Viscount's second in command, I remember, shuffled with his feet even under Mr. Browning's look ; yet it lasted but an instant, no more. This is a thing most characteristic of a born leader of men, as I think ; to be able to look through a man's eyes into his soul, and rate him at once at his proper worth.

I was pleased with him, but I think that Rosa's manner with him pleased me better yet. She had made a great impression. Mr. Clotworthy Skeffington, in especial, seemed greatly struck with her ; but so, for the matter of that, was every other man in the room, though they had not, like him, the pleasure of holding her in talk at that moment. But in spite of his gallantry, which I make no doubt was great, there was some tinge of weariness upon her face, which I set down to Wamphray's absence. Admiration doth not fill the heart, and a feast that lacks the salt of one wished-for presence is but a savourless feast after all.

But the moment her brother came within her sight, all that was changed ; her face grew as rosy as any bride's. There came into her eyes such a light as I had never seen in them before. She withdrew no jot of her attention from Mr. Skeffington, and yet any that had eyes in their heads could discern that she was conscious of Mr. Browning's presence from the top curl of her

head-tire to the tip of her velvet shoe. I would fain hope that my own attention wandered not, so as to be seen ; yet I noted this, and, what is more, I noted it with envy. There was no such feeling between Wamphray and me as this that lived between Rosa and Mr. Browning. We were close friends, as it is pity that brother and sister should ever be other ; but for these two, the relation between them was a thing altogether by itself. 'Twas more like the tales that are recorded of twins than aught else that ever I saw ; and yet they were no twins. On the contrary, Rosa was so much the younger that she might well have passed for Mr. Browning's daughter instead of his sister.

Being presented to Mr. Skeffington by Rosa, Mr. Browning joined in their talk, that I could hear had something to do with the disturbed state of affairs in England, whereof my Lord Massareene hath ever early news. But in a moment after I heard so much, the supper was announced in earnest, and for an hour or more after that 'twas but little attention I paid to any of them, being most fully occupied with the two lords, that were seated the one on my right hand and the other on my left, as was, of course, their due. Faith, had I given them less of my notice, and more to the general drift of the talk, as was my plain duty in times so dangerous, it had been better for all of us in the long-run. And yet even now I scarce can blame myself, for my Lord Mountjoy had a vein of talk that night that had been enough to beguile the ear of a maid at her marriage. And then, there was not a Catholic present, nor any stickler for the high doctrine of the Right Divine ; we were all to my knowledge of one mind on the questions of Protestantism and the Test Act, and the other subjects of danger, so that my watchfulness might well have winked, even had my lord been dull. There are Hamiltons Catholic and high loyalist, to be sure, but not one of them was present that night.

It was Rosa and Mr. Skeffington that drew our feet into the paths of danger at the last, she asking my Lord Massareene, from her place on the other side of the table, for some further account of the things his son had been telling her of. To which he responded cautiously enough, no doubt, at first ; but becoming heated with the subjects he handled, he threw prudence to the winds, and began to tell us instances of the King's infatuation that went beyond belief. Mr. Skeffington took up the ball on his side of the table, adding circumstances that my lord, his

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father, had forgotten, or perhaps had judged it wise to pass over.

More and more the company ceased to talk apart, and began to listen to these two; at last one took it on himself to doubt whether something my lord had said could be very fact; whereat Sir Arthur Rawdon struck in, declaring he had heard the same report as my Lord Massareene.

"But it may be a mere report—a story of a cock and a bull," said the gentleman that had spoken before; I think 'twas Mr. Hawkins.

"I think not, sir," said a calm voice from further down the table—Mr. Browning's. "My lord hath had the matter reported to him exactly as I believe it befell; there is nothing over-stated."

My Lord Massareene, that had a little reddened to hear his story doubted (though sure am I that Mr. Hawkins meant him no discourtesy), bent forward to see Mr. Browning the better; and I heard my Lady Hamilton ask my husband, from where she sat on his right, who the gentleman was that spoke with so much authority, and how he came to know so well. With that Captain Hamilton spoke to Mr. Browning from his place, and the attention of every soul at the table was arrested.

"Mr. Browning," said he, "here's a lady that desires your better acquaintance: permit me to present you to Lady Hamilton, my aunt; perhaps you'll tell her and all of us how you come to speak of the matter with such assured knowledge. Not that I mean to cast the smallest doubt upon your right to do so."

"Nor I neither, sir," said Lady Hamilton, as they bowed to each other.

"'Tis a matter easy enough to answer," said Mr. Browning, with a smile. "I am but just returned from England, where the tale is in everybody's mouth; I had it myself from an eye-witness."

"My Lord Massareene," said the old lady, "perhaps you will do me the favour to repeat this wonderful tale for my benefit; for I protest I did not hear a word of it."

Being thus questioned, my lord had no choice but to tell the tale again; it was that of King James's attempt to obtain the assent of Lord Lichfield's regiment to his assumption of arbitrary power in dispensing with the Test Act and the penal statutes. He described, with much humour, the haranguing of them by the King in person, and how he enlarged to them his purpose of procuring toleration for all opinions; as though there was a man

among them that knew not the meaning of that, or that knew not where his toleration for the Nonconformists would fly to, let him but once be surrounded by Catholics in office. Yet he stuck not to ask them to express by their acclamations their acceptance of this his design, or else to lay down their arms, telling them that such as did so should never lift them again in his service.

"Then," continued my lord, "instead of acclamation, there was heard a low murmuring all along the line, the officers joining in it as well as the men. There was a little hesitation that lasted scarce a moment, and then, beginning with the officer commanding, they one and all laid down their arms—at least," said he, correcting himself, "I believe there was one officer that retained his, and maybe a score of private soldiers, all told."

"And what said his Majesty to that?" asked Lady Hamilton, putting the question that was on the lips of every one that had not heard the story told the first time.

"Why, he was extremely displeased," said Lord Massareene; "at that none can marvel. He ordered the regiment back into quarters, I suppose under arrest, and told them that never while he lived would he honour them again by asking them for their opinion."

He looked to Mr. Browning for confirmation, who bowed.

"'Tis the exact story in every circumstance," said he, "as I heard it from one that was present, save only that he said nothing about arresting them; that, perhaps, had scarce been prudent, considering the temper they had shown. He rated them soundly, as your lordship hath said, making use of the very words you repeated; but I believe he let them take up their arms before retiring to their quarters."

"And so ends his Majesty's ill-judged attempt to repeal, by his single authority, a law the country is determined to uphold. 'Twill be a lesson to him another time, no doubt."

James Hamilton, my lady's son and our cousin, spoke to this effect.

"Under your favour, sir," said Mr. Skeffington, a little hotly, "what earthly reason have we, at this time of day, to hope that King James will stoop to accept a lesson so salutary?"

There was a little stir here and there round the table at these bold words; a cautious man might have been warned and checked, but Mr. Skeffington was not. He continued, taking no heed of it:

"The abolition of the Test Act hath been his chief aim since ever he came to the throne; sure, there's none of us but knows what to expect if he should ever carry it. Will he ever give it up, sir, do you think?" said he, appealing to Mr. Browning, four or five down the table on the other side from himself.

"I fear not, indeed, sir," answered he, shaking his head.

"No, truly," went on Skeffington; "as soon entice a blood-hound to leave the trail as persuade the King to abandon a purpose he had given his mind to, especially if he think it a matter of religion."

"That is sure a noble quality," said I.

"Surely, madam," said Sir Arthur Rawdon, "were it but mixed with judgment, which it is not; or even with some sense of human error, which it is still less."

"And that's very true, Sir Arthur," said Mr. Skeffington. "A man had need to be a very prophet, or a very Pope, to be as inflexible in the pursuit of his designs as King James. But you, sir, that are newly from England, tell us, if you will, how things seem to be going in that country."

"But very poorly, sir, I fear," answered Mr. Browning. "Since the birth of this young Prince of Wales there is everywhere a looking-up on the part of the Papists. While the Princess Mary was her father's heir, they were reasonably humble. His Majesty's favour and protection elated them to some degree, no doubt; but yet they knew it was no more than a season of prosperity; they were well enough assured that at their patron's death the sun would come round again to the other side of the hedge. But now——"

Here he stopped, looking at Captain Hamilton, as if he feared to transgress the bounds of prudence if he should say more.

My husband is none of the most prudent of men with his tongue; but yet both he and all the rest of us were aware of the pains and penalties attached to high treason, and sure there was none of us that desired to stand within their danger. Therefore I suppose that, had he taken time to think, he had turned the conversation into another channel, as Mr. Browning by his manner plainly hinted would be safe. But a man's zeal doth run away with his wit full often; and so likewise doth the zeal of his company, if he share it. And the table was circled with zealous Protestants; even our chief guest himself, though up till that time reputed a staunch Royalist, was known to all the world for

one of the heads of that party in Ireland. It was he, when Captain Hamilton paused, that bade Mr. Browning continue.

"Well, sir; and now pray continue. What do they now expect?" said he.

"Faith, my lord, pretty much the same as we should expect in their place," struck in Mr. Skeffington, who was the keenest partisan among us, save only, perhaps, Sir Arthur Rawdon. "A continuation of the favour they're enjoying at present, at the very least, with very likely a charge at their old enemies, the Protestants, into the bargain. And not a doubt but they'll get it, if we manage not our affairs the better. The young Prince will be brought up a Papist, like his father—that's past praying against; he will be taught to think it the capstone of his glory if he should attain to reconcile the three kingdoms with Rome. And, after such a training, what can be looked for but that he should try to bring it about by fair means or foul?"

At this speech the last shreds of wisdom were cast to the winds; there was not a man at table, save one only, but waited for an opportunity to put in his word and speak his mind. My Lord Mountjoy leaned forward in his place to address Mr. Browning. The words I missed, but it was plainly a question as to his own private opinion on these matters. Thus appealed to, and by such a man, he had no choice but to say distinctly what he thought; and so he did.

"The last gentleman that spoke put the case exactly, as it seemed to me," said he. "No one hath the least doubt that the young Prince (if he be indeed the Prince, on which point many doubts are cast) will be brought up in the Romish faith, and to think it his plain duty to restore it as the established Church of the three kingdoms. What meant those pilgrimages to Loretto that all mouths were full of if not that? What reason could there be——?" Here again he paused, and looked at Captain Hamilton.

"We are all friends here and of one mind, as I take it," said he, replying to the look.

For the servants, of whose discretion one could not make certain, especially when so many of them were strangers, having come but for the day with their masters, had long since left the room.

"You go about, sir, more than the most of us," continued my husband, "and have more opportunity of learning what's thought

on the other side of the Channel, and it will be a favour if you will be frank with us. We are all friends, I'm certain."

And with that he looked up and down the table. Every one present, man and woman, assented in one fashion or another. Mr. Browning bowed, and then continued:

"If his Majesty have indeed committed this stupendous fraud—to pass off upon the country a child that is not his and the Queen's—what can be the motive, but to procure himself a successor that will carry out all his plans? Mind you, I am far from affirming that he hath done this—God forbid he should be base enough!—but it is currently reported throughout England, for I missed no chance of hearing what was said. High and low, they are all in one tale, that the King is one that will stick at nothing to carry out his plans. Now, the mere fact that such a story is told and believed points no more plainly to their mistrust of him than to their fear of a Romish successor."

"Why should they have so great a dread of that?" asked I, repenting me of my foolish question before it was well out of my mouth. For truly there was not one of us but knew well enough, and too well, what reason the country hath to mislike a Catholic on the throne.

"Why, madam?" said he, answering me. "Because he will establish his father's acts, and continue his tyranny for a certainty. The Test Act once repealed, what is to hinder him from filling all offices and all commands with Catholics, as he hath already filled the best of them? Once let the Papists get the upper hand of us, and we know what to look for. Hath any one forgotten what happened in England in '85? That which came to pass in this very county in the year '41, when the grandfather of my lord at your right hand saved Derry from fire and the citizens from the swords of the Irish, hath still a plenty of living witnesses. Nay, I have myself seen things—and that none so long ago, neither—that are enough to make a man forswear his country, if the author of them is to be upheld."

As he ended, half a dozen gentlemen spoke at once, the memories he recalled laying hold of them, so that there was a small tumult for a moment. Then Mr. Dacre of Quantock, our old and dear friend, was heard, the other voices occupying themselves in begging pardon of each other. Mr. Dacre hath good reason to remember the troubles of the forties, for as long ago as they happened; for his father's house on the Boyne was one of

those that held out against the rebels, being well fortified and bravely manned; in the long-run, the house being tenable no longer, they made good their escape to Drogheda, where they took part in the famous defence of it against the Irish.

"Remember it!" he was saying when I could hear him. "I can just fairly hear the yells of the wild Ultoghs at this moment, now that you've sent my mind back upon it."

Here my Lord Mountjoy spoke, commanding at once the attention of all at table.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am sure our host and hostess will agree with me that this conversation is trenching on matters that were best let alone. We are all friends and Protestants, 'tis true; but for all that 'tis unwise to cast aspersions at the powers that be. Besides, I hardly see myself that the Government can be held responsible for many acts that have caused discontent, they being done without its sanction."

Had my lord contented himself with recommending caution, which came very well from his mouth, no doubt his advice had been followed. But this attempt to justify the Government could scarce be allowed to pass unchallenged. It was my Lord Massareene that replied to it, the only man at table that could have done so without presumption.

"I would have you to consider, my lord Viscount," said he, "whether it hath ever disowned any of the worst of them. The actions it may, perhaps, on very rare occasions, though I protest I cannot call to mind a single instance; but the actors never, if they can be depended on to do the King's will through thick and thin. What other title to favour had the Lord Chief Justice, to name but one example, than his utter contempt of the law when the King's will ran counter to it?"

"Ah!" said Sir Arthur Rawdon; "and what other title to favour had lying Dick Talbot, our most worshipful Lord Deputy, than his disregard of all obligations, human and Divine, save when it might happen that to observe them led straight to royal favour?"

"Nay, under favour," said Mr. Phillips, our neighbour at Newtown-Limavady, "you're too hard on the Lord Deputy there, Sir Arthur. It's not so much his happiness to bask in the King's smile as King—not that I mean to say he holds it lightly, especially when it carries earldoms and such-like gauds along with it. But it's as an Irishman working for the supremacy of the Irishry

that he's in his element; and it's because his views and the King's on that point jump together that they're so thick."

"'Thick as thieves,' you might say, and wrong neither of them," said Mr. Skeffington. "Faith, 'tis a thieving end they have in view, to take the land from them that have it, and give it to them that want it!"

"Ay, truly," said Sir Arthur, "and the power from them that can use it, to give it to them that are as certain to abuse it as death is to come at the end of life."

"Ay, and it's sure enough death is to come before the end of life," said another, whereat there was a kind of sudden laugh that sounded more like a groan. "Well, then, before the natural end of it, I mean, if the Irish get their way. Skeans and great hunting-knives for them that never hunt, and chain-bridles for them that are more used to a bit of straw-rope to their garrons' jaws! Wasn't it yourself, Mr. Phillips, that got hold of a cool fifty of them in the house of a parish priest the other day?"

"Ay," said Mr. Dacre, not noticing the question; "and every blackguard of an Ultogh with his brace of pistols—or, just as like, his piece—while every man of the Protestant gentry hath an order served upon him to deliver up his arms to Tyrconnel's nominee; and the nominee certain to be a Catholic, too, to give his fellows news that we're unarmed, if they desire to have at us. Ah, but it's possible they may catch a Tartar here and there, for all their carefulness."

"You may make oath of that," said Mr. Phillips, very dryly. "I warrant the ancientness of the fashioning of the firearms of the Ulster gentry hath not escaped notice up at the Castle in Dublin. We shall be having search-warrants presented next at our houses by these same Catholic nominees."

"With very like a clause in them to inform the lieges in Ireland that it's a matter of high treason, with the pains and penalties thereto attached, should arms of any sort be found in their possession!" said Mr. Skeffington.

"Ah, like enough," said some one near him, "when it's too late to profit by the warning, were one so inclined. That is ever the course of the present Government. The question for us is, Are we going to endure such usage any longer? Is it not time that we should think of means for our own defence, when the Government that ought to defend us is bent on selling us, like

sheep for the slaughter, to them that will think no more of killing a Protestant than of killing a sheep?"

"More!" said Mr. Dacre. "Faith! it's easy to see you're over-young, sir, to remember the year '41. More! Why, sir, 'tis a great merit towards Heaven to kill a Protestant, be he man or maid—or infant in arms, for the matter of that. A man that dies in fight against us is as safe of heaven as any Mussulman killed in a war against misbelievers. Why, sir, they carry charms to absolve from the sin of perjury, suppose they should swear quarter to us if we lay down our arms, and then kill us as soon as they get at us."

"Sir, sir," said my Lord Mountjoy, that had more than once endeavoured to interpose, but had never been able to make himself heard in the babel, "sure you're saying more than you have warrant for. There's human nature in Catholics and Irishmen, I dare swear."

"None but what the priest can send to sleep, my lord," said Mr. Dacre, bluntly; "and never a word have I said but what I've seen on the back of their dirty little charm-papers, wrapped round their holy grains of St. Joan, and so forth. My good old friend, Nicolas Barnard, the Lord Bishop of Drogheda, had them by the dozen, taken from the corpses of the Irish soldiers. I've seen them many a time. Lord! the trash the poor benighted heathen would carry passes belief—St. James's girdles to ensure against death in battle; pictures of the Virgin Mary's shoe-sole to make them proof against cold steel. Sure, I grudge them none of these, were these all; but it's the doctrine that no faith need be kept with heretics that sticks in my throat. I can forgive them anything else but that."

"But that," said my lord, "is a doctrine held only by the Jesuits; you mustn't blame the Catholics in general for that."

"Devil a bit of it, my lord! (that I should say such a word before the ladies!)," said Mr. Dacre. "Or, at least, if so it be, there's more of them Jesuit than owns it. If it began among the Jesuits, the other Papists have taken to it like ducks to water. Think but of the King himself and his promises, and you'll be convinced; you'll very soon see what faith it's wise to put in promises that the priest can absolve from."

"You'll argue a long time," said Lord Mountjoy with some heat, "before you'll convince me that his Majesty hath ever acted with deliberate perfidy, and I hope 'tis a task you won't attempt."

Why, sir, times change ; 'tis no more than justice to consider that. A man might even require to break a promise in the letter to keep it in the spirit."

"Is it so that you deem of the King's breaches of faith?" asked Mr. Dacre dryly.

"Think but of him fairly," said my lord ; "impute not evil to him without due cause. You were never won't to be ungenerous in your reading of men's motives, Mr. Dacre. Is it overmuch to ask the same charity for your Sovereign that you show to men your equals?"

My lord spoke with the dignity that became him, and it told to advantage among the rest that were more heated. His sentiments sat well on him, too, his family having ever been supporters of the Stuarts, from whom they have derived much favour ; as witness my lord's own peerage, a very recent instance. He spoke, therefore, only as he might have been expected to speak, for all his Protestant faith, and he had the advantages of coolness and deliberation besides ; but he carried not a man at table with him, for all that. But Mr. Dacre, putting aside the heat of the moment, appeared to be gathering himself together, as it were, to reply deliberately to my lord's deliberate speech ; and none could help seeing then how much deeper went the bitterness than the heat, it being ever the plainer the calmer he became.

"It is perfectly true, my lord Viscount," said he, "that his Majesty hath often told us roundly what to expect at his hands, and in the article of fulfilment he hath but rarely come short of his word ; for, having promised to chastise us with whips, he hath many times chastised us with scorpions instead. Few will have the hardihood to deny that. But as a matter of deliberate perfidy, and that since your lordship hath challenged it, what think you of his conduct to the high dignitaries of the Church? What think you of his behaviour at Oxford in the filling up of the vacant Principalship of Magdalen? Was Farmer a fitting person to hold it in John Hough's room, think you? We have all heard of what befell the fellows and graduates, all of them that demurred to his Majesty's illegal action in that instance, and that after promises given and repeated. And that is but one case out of many—*many*. Here in Derry itself is it not within our own knowledge how he appointed Dean Manby, a Romanist, to the temporalities of the deanery, a thing he hath no more right to do, my lord, than I have to authorise your butler to draw the rents of

my Lord Massareene here? And is a breach of trust less perfidious than the breach of a promise made in words? These are small instances, perhaps; I can give you more, and greater, if you so desire. What say you, my Lord Mountjoy, to the means he is well known to have taken to gain a verdict against persons that were obnoxious to him, and that not once nor twenty times? He that makes no scruple to pack a jury, not to say a bench of judges, so to steal away an innocent life, is he not guilty of deliberate perfidy? May we not ask, rather, if there is any other act of treachery so black that he will stick at it? Ingratitude is perhaps scarce treachery, yet 'tis flour out of the same bag; and do but think of the reward that some of his most loyal subjects and faithfulest servants have met with, they being Protestant; think but of his Grace of Ormonde, to take one instance out of scores. The old man died broken-hearted but a very few weeks before the University incurred the King's renewed displeasure—and that none so delicately expressed neither—by choosing his son for their Chancellor instead of my Lord Chief Justice Jeffries, of whose services the King hath a deeper sense than of Ormonde's and Ossory's. My Lord Viscount Mountjoy, to you and your family the King hath shown a little of that gratitude which all his faithful servants had a right to expect he would feel, even if he lacked the means to show it. Perhaps you are therefore bound to him, but I am not, nor are any of the rest of us here present. I have nothing to hope from his favour, and at my age 'tis scarce worth while to begin to hold him in terror. I look at his expressed intentions, I consider the means he hath chosen to carry them out, and I mistrust both him and his tools. A man that would try to filch from his own daughter one of the three kingdoms that are her just inheritance—as James undoubtedly tried to do this of Ireland before this precious Prince of Wales appeared—will do anything else that is underhand. I therefore say deliberately that I acknowledge him no more as my Sovereign. I hear whisperings of an embassy to the Prince of Orange; should he come over to our relief, I for one will join him, with such poor strength as I may muster. In any case, I renounce King James."

This was going further than most of those at table dared; there went along them a long-drawn breath, as it were, of awe at his temerity, and hesitation whether to follow him or no. But the next moment Mr. Skeffington sprang up from his seat with his

eyes on fire, as one might figure their passion ; and as he did so, I saw from my place that Sir Arthur Rawdon, sitting next but one to Mr. Dacre, passed his hand in front of Mrs. Hawkins, that sat between them, and grasped the hand of Mr. Dacre.

"I am with you, sir !" said he quite audibly.

"And I, sir !" said Mr. Skeffington in a strange voice, that rang clear through a kind of huskiness, like one half choked with his own eagerness. "Sir," he went on, "you have blood in your veins ! Sir, you have a heart in your breast ! You teach us younger men both how we ought to feel and how we ought to act. 'Tis no time for passive obedience any more, and the divine right of kings doth not extend to treachery and murder, as you truly say. A man might surrender his own neck, perhaps, rather than to break a tie so dear as loyalty ; but the lives of his wife and children, the lives of his sisters and his mother, crave defence at his hands. Sir, I for one will not sit me down cowardly at my fireside, there to be over-ridden by Irish scullogues, for fear of offending the powers that be. I will 'gar my hand keep my head,' as a good Scotch saying hath it—ay, and the heads of them that depend on me—so far as one man's power may compass their protection. And if there be anything public toward, with the purpose of keeping the right side uppermost, I am for it."

"And so say I," said Sir Arthur Rawdon. "There are Protestants enough in Ulster to make good their defence against any force the Irishry can raise, so undisciplined as they be. It will be our own fault if we let them come to such a head that we cannot deal with them. I shall do my best to get this properly laid before all the gentlemen of influence in the province, and it will go hard, but we make a league that shall be strong enough to set us beyond the need of defence from the Government."

"My dear Sir Arthur ! my dear Clotworthy !" said Captain Hamilton, with a laugh that was not very merry, but was rather meant to put a face of mere hot-headed talk upon what was, in truth, a very serious matter, "you will be pleased to remember that I hold his Majesty's commission, and not to say anything in my house that shall make it my duty to deliver you up to the military authorities at table."

"Indeed, Mr. Hamilton," said my Lord Mountjoy, "I was just about to put you in mind of that same fact of your commission, thinking that your remembrance of it is something of the latest."

"With your lordship's pardon," said Captain Hamilton, "I

hold it no offence to discuss the King's actions, even for men that hold a commission in his name. We have that same good example of Lord Lichfield and his regiment to back me up in mine opinion, showing that the King himself cannot object to such discussion, seeing he doth all in his power to further it. But of course," said he, with a very sly bow to Sir Arthur and Mr. Clotworthy Skeffington (both of them famous for an excessive zeal which doth run away with their wisdom) "I can't be a party to absolute sedition under present circumstances."

"That would almost seem to imply," said Colonel Lundy, who, listening to every word, had yet taken no part at all in the conversation, save to profess himself a friend—"that would seem to imply that under other circumstances your conscience, might perhaps absolve you."

I have said already that Captain Hamilton is apt to be imprudent in his speech, though not to Sir Arthur's and Mr. Skeffington's degree, and he is, moreover, as unsuspecting as he is rash. There was that in Colonel Lundy's manner that warned me to put nothing in his power, and I would have given much for the chance of speaking but one single word to my husband before he replied. But though he looked at the two lords at my right and left before he spoke, I could not catch his eye for so much as a glance of warning.

"Well, Lundy," said he, "if our Colonel will permit us to speak exactly as we feel—and, as we're all friends, I scarce see why we should forbear it—I believe it will come to that sooner or later. I would fain believe the King's intention to be as he states it—to wit, of toleration to Nonconformists and Catholics alike. There might lurk a danger in that, no doubt; but yet, considering the King's own creed, a reasonable man could scarce refuse it to him. But I sadly fear that all the likelihood runs just the other way, and that as soon as the Catholics are strong enough to do without the Nonconformist alliance, the Nonconformist allies (supposing them to have become such, of which Mr. Browning tells us there is no sign at present) will be treated with exactly the same mercy and toleration which King James showed them in Scotland when he was Duke of York. They themselves must look for nothing else, or else do you think they would refuse so great a benefit as toleration when 'tis set within their reach? That carries "Nay" on the face of it. Now, there's no one here but knows the King's character, how persistent he is. When he

hath set his mind upon a purpose, 'tis like rending his prey from a tiger to make him give it up. I greatly fear that things which might serve as warnings to another man will but provoke him to greater obstinacy—such scenes, for instance, as that with the troops on Hounslow Heath, whereof we have even now heard, or such as London was full of from end to end as soon as the seven bishops were known to be acquitted. Then, you see, Lundy, and gentlemen all"—looking round upon his company—"the choice would fall to be made. Would we, because we hold his commission, uphold him in measures we heartily disapprove of against the Nonconformists that are our fellows in belief—measures, too, that he can only enforce at our swords' point? I would not, for as little of a Nonconformist as I be, nor, I think, would many of us."

"And if he yielded not to the expostulations of his officers, nor to the desires of the bulk of his troops?" questioned Lundy. "If he persisted still with any strength that might be left to him, what then?"

"Why, then," said Captain Hamilton, "it might come to be necessary to have our commissions new made out in the name of another Stuart that is known to be as much attached to the Reformed religion as her father is against it, and whose husband is the bulwark and hope of that religion throughout Europe—under Heaven, of course."

"Well, Captain Hamilton, I must say that for a gentleman presently holding the King's commission, at all events, you go pretty far," said Lord Mountjoy.

"You may trust me to do nothing against his authority while I do retain it," replied my husband.

"Then, sir, you must not indicate to his liege subjects that, in certain contingencies highly dishonourable to his Majesty, you will think yourself justified in transferring your service to his daughter and her husband, the Stadtholder."

"Should such contingencies arise," said Colonel Lundy, "how would your lordship think it your duty to behave, yourself?"

Lord! where do men keep their eyes, and of what use are they to them? For as Mr. Lundy put this question he looked up the table full at my lord Viscount, and thus I as well as he had a full and even look at him, and of all the treacherous, cruel, and false eyes that ever I saw in a human visage, Colonel Lundy's were the falsest, the cruellest, the most full of the advertisement of

treachery. Had Eve looked the serpent in the eyes at the moment of her temptation—to be sure, they all but shut them in the daylight—she might have seen some such expression, and surely, being a woman, she had been warned. But my lord, sitting in his place, looked this other serpent straight in the face, and saw nothing there but pure honesty. Such is the penetration of a man when suspicion hath not put him on his mettle.

“Sir,” he said, “if King James should show himself the vindictive and oppressive and deceitful wretch that these gentlemen do him the honour to suppose him, no man of heart and honour *could* support him. I, being, I hope, a man of honour and of some heart, should no doubt renounce his service like the rest. Perhaps I, too, might go the length of attaching myself to his opponents; but that,” said he, looking round upon us very proudly, “will never be.”

Alas, my poor lord! he hath had good reason to change his mind since then.

But Colonel Lundy's face took on the expression that a fox's might display if by any chance he should entrap a lion that he had feared.

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE LORD VISCOUNT RID AWAY FROM CLONCALLY, LEAVING
AN ANXIOUS HEART BEHIND HIM.

MISERABLE woman was I, as I remembered this our folly the next morning, before it was time to rise. Through and through the sieve of my memory I passed that which had been said, like one that endeavoured to bray it small enough to pass clean out of mind as a thing of no account. But ever the more I tossed it to and fro, the harder and the greater appeared the clots, the balls that we had made for ourselves to be struck thereby—and undone.

There was enough in the thought merely of the breach of manners we had been guilty of to hinder me of my rest. He that had honoured us by coming under our roof, that honoured us still by abiding there, all courtesy required that his pleasure should have been consulted before everything else, and certainly in the subjects we chose to converse upon. Instead of which, he had been countered and well-nigh browbeaten at my table; his wishes disregarded for all so plain as he had been driven to speak them, and himself thwarted in his endeavour to turn us back into the paths of prudence. 'Twas little less than shameful rudeness, and I scarce knew with what face I might crave his pardon.

Then came my thoughts back again to the graver matter; sure and indeed it was grave enough, the best I could make of it. In the cool reflection of the morning silence I could not shut mine eyes to the fact that we had put our heads into a pretty noose, if any hand were there to draw it; my husband just as thoroughly as his friends, in the long-run, for all he had tried to hold them back at the first. And my mind misgave me but there was a hand to draw that noose—a hand that had no distaste to the office. The

face of Lundy dwelt upon mine eyes ; I saw it painted out upon the darkness ; I saw it between me and the dawning light ; I saw it as he put the question to Lord Mountjoy, "In such a contingency, what would you do yourself?" At the thought of the look it wore, my heart died within me.

Who could say but my lord, though he had said so much to hold us back from the paths of peril, had ended by thrusting his own neck into the same noose he feared for us? It was even but too likely, a thought whereat I could well have groaned aloud. Why, being wise for us, was he not wise for himself? Why did he not evade that wicked question?—which Lundy, instead of being answered, should have been rebuked for daring to put to his superior officer.

I protested that, unquiet as I was in mind about Captain Hamilton, I had well-nigh been content to bear that trouble could I but have made sure that, whatever peril threatened him, my lord was free of it. It seemed a thing weak to wickedness to have sat by and seen him enticed to his own betrayal, when a spoken word might have saved him. I asked myself what spell it was that had forced me to silence. Why could not I have traversed his reply, had it been but with some light jest? 'Twas a discourtesy I had been well content to answer. Alas! the thought of the thing I might have done was but an added folly, since it was the thing I had not done. To be wise behindhand is but to lock the door when the steed is stolen.

Another thing that kept stirring in my mind was that which Adam Murray said to me, when he came to take his leave. "I would," said he to me, drawing me apart—"I would we had been more guarded with our tongues before that sour-faced Puritan, Colonel Lundy." "If he be but a sour-faced Puritan," quoth I to him, "we shall do well enough," whereat he shook his head. "I mislike him," said he. "I wish he had been bereft of his ears this day, or else we of our tongues!" To which I rejoined, being willing to pass the matter off lightly, so to lighten mine own fear, "The tongue is an unruly evil, Adam; who can guide it? Not a weak woman, sit she never so firm in her chair at the head of the table!" But his fear weighed upon me like a fetter, and bound mine own upon me ten times more straitly, for he spoke but mine own thought, and he, as well as Mr. Browning, is a man that hath the leader's gift of making by instinctive apprehension a true estimate of men, their character and worth.

Well, it was useless, and worse, it was weak, to brood on these things, seeing I could not by brooding alter them a whit; and so I rose and dressed me, seeking to put trouble aside until such time as Captain Hamilton should awake. He slept as peaceful and as quiet as any child. Men are strange creatures, after all; danger is but a medicine to them. One should say that it doth but brace them to a new sense of life, as the chase affects a hound that is bred to it.

Returning to my chamber after the morning round of inspection that I ever use to make, unnecessary though it be, with Margery at the heels of the maids before me, I found him awake and astir. The time I judged no bad one to open the matter, before he should come in company with my lord Viscount and his party that were all in the house. Sitting down, therefore, beside him, I gave a loose to all my misgivings and all my regrets, which I found him much disposed to set at naught.

"It's perfectly true, Mary," said he to me, "that we let our tongues run away with our wits, more or less; but, after all, what does it matter? There was none among us but had his share in the pie, not one. And if it were not so, do ye think there was any man at table not fit to be trusted? Believe me, we're safe enough, for all our folly."

"But my lord Viscount," said I. "We treated his scruples with scant respect. How often he desired we would quit the talk of politics; he might as well have spoken to the winds. He hath good enough reason to think us a set of unmannerly companions."

"It's a certain fact that we should have paid more respect to his cautions," said Captain Hamilton. "They met with scant observance, as you say; but, after all, there were men at table as good as he, and better, that he could scarce look to control with a word, like a dominie his boys. My lord is too good a comrade, Mary, not to take into account the effect that a pint of claret under his belt hath on a man's tongue, at such a time of public excitement, too, when matters of State mount into men's brains like wine."

"It was for that very reason he besought us to keep clear of them," said I.

"True enough, I believe," said he; "but for all that, you needn't forget that he took his own share in setting the ball a-rolling. In fact, I wouldn't take my oath that it wasn't himself that started it off at the first, asking Browning for his opinion of

the temper of the nation over in England. A man that had done that can scarce expect to whistle back his company as the huntsman doth a pack of hounds that have mistook their quarry. My lord is too reasonable a man to bear malice for a fault of discretion he led the way to himself. And even if he did, which, I assure you, I think most unlikely, we are as safe in his hands as a babe in its mother's. My lord is staunch to a very fault—a man that might be trusted to keep his mouth shut on the rack rather than hurt his friends."

"I think no less of him, indeed," said I. "But do you think we can put the same confidence in every one of the gentlemen that came hither in his company?"

"Now, which of them do you glance at there?" said Captain Hamilton, with a look that was anything but satisfied.

I shook in my shoes, I promise you, before I spoke; for there is nothing that so angers him as a suspicion that he thinks unfounded. But I judged it a time to use greater plainness, so, braving his displeasure, I mentioned Colonel Lundy to him by name.

"Lundy?" said he, amazed, as it seemed. "Lundy said she?—heard ever man the like? Now, Mary, I know well enough that this idea proceeds solely from your anxiety for your husband's safety, which it's most engaging of you to concern yourself about so tenderly; otherwise, do you know, I'd have been apt to tell you that your suspicion of my friend does but little honour either to yourself or me."

"Is Colonel Lundy, then, your friend?" asked I, with a faltering voice; for it hath very rarely happened to me to be chidden by my husband, and it touches me very nearly at the heart.

"All the officers of a regiment are supposed to be friends to each other, according to their degree," said he. "Unless, to be sure, at such times as there may be an affair on foot, and after that's over they're better friends than ever. But I will tell you, my dear and sweet little wife, what is a very safe rule for any lady to go by: and that's to consider that any man her husband brings into his house is to be treated—ay, and thought of—as his sworn friend and brother all the time he's there."

Now, this speech of Captain Hamilton's showed me, as plain as if he had said it, that there was no friendship at all between the Colonel and himself; for this is not the way in which my husband, one of the warmest-hearted of men, speaks of such men

as he cherishes a true regard for. Had anybody hinted evil against Adam Murray, for instance, that is my kinsman and not his, how far different had been his denial! But as for persisting in what I would fain have said, I dared not do it, being clean daunted already by the thought of his anger.

And yet it was a thing equally beyond me to let him ride away with that man—a traitor, as I would have wagered my right hand—without another attempt to put him on his guard. That which I have said already had done nothing at all, save to increase the danger, as I was abundantly aware. For well I knew my husband, and his knight-errantry of generosity. Knowing the man to be suspected—and, as he thought, unjustly—by one so near himself as his own wife, it was great odds but he went out of his way to repose confidence in him, even to the imperilling of his own safety, so to atone to him, as it were, for the insult of my distrust, whereof he knew nothing.

While I pondered how to lay the matter before him once more, and that without seeming to question his right to forbid the subject, Margery brought little Roland to the door of the chamber—three years old and a month, almost to a day, and, though I say it myself, as forward and fine a child of his age as one could wish to see. His father takes much pleasure in seeing him trotting about his knees, and it was our custom, whenever Captain Hamilton was at home, to bring Roland into the room “to help dada to be d’essed,” as he said. As I was playing with the little fellow, tossing him up and down, a thought came into my head: I might say that to the child in play which I wished the father to hear in earnest. So, fearing like any coward lest my heart should fail me if I gave it time, I even plunged forthwith into the midst of the stream.

“Baby boy,” I said, “dada’s going to ride back to Derry this very day.”

“Dat’s a pity!” said Roland.

“Tell him to take care of himself, for mother’s sake and yours, baby boy,” I went on.

“Dada,” said the child, “mind ’oo takes care and not tumble down, cos muddy and Roy ’d ky.”

“Muddy and Roy would cry, would they?” said his father, smiling.

“Yes, they would,” said I. “If anything happened to hurt father, it would break their hearts!”

"B'ake 'ems hearts," repeated Roland very seriously, putting his hand on his stomach, whereat his father began to laugh.

"And oh, tell him, little Roland," I went on, taking hold of my courage with both hands, as the saying is—"tell him that if he were to say anything to any bad man that the bad man might repeat, and so bring evil upon him—oh, Roland darling, whatever should we do? we'd never smile again."

This was far too long a speech for the dear little child to carry, or even to understand; but one thing he plainly gathered—that some evil was about to befall his adored "dada." He toddled up to him with the most pitiful face imaginable.

"Nebby, nebby, 'mile again!" said he, holding up his two little hands and bursting into tears.

Captain Hamilton could not help catching him up to kiss and comfort him. He spoke to me, making a vain endeavour to be stern:

"I could well be angry with you, Mary, for this persistent folly," said he, "if I did not see you had it so deeply at heart. Will it content you, now, if I promise to be careful?"

"Careful to the verge of cowardice," said I, trying to smile, but with tears in my eyes and in my voice.

"What, Mary—tears? *You!*" said my husband, amazed; for, indeed, 'tis very seldom that I use to weep. "Oh, the little silly! Oh, the trick to beguile a man of his wrath! Well, then, careful to the verge of cowardice," says he in a different voice, "if that's what you desire in your husband."

"Only in speech," said I.

So then he comforted me, as well as the child; and presently I went downstairs with a lighter heart than I had carried up them. The past could not be undone, that was sure enough; but yet it was something to be assured for the future, and I was thankful accordingly.

When my Lord Mountjoy made his appearance, I made him at once, and in plain language, the apology that was his due. He, on his part, made as though there had been naught amiss; never woman had a guest more amiable or one more desirous to discharge her of all blame that she knew herself to have merited. But for all his complacency to me, there was that in his face when he regarded Captain Hamilton that I had given the world to have been able to fathom.

Captain Hamilton thought it proper civility on his part to set

his guests on their way to Dublin ; indeed, it is a roundabout road to that city to take Cloncalla on the way. Neither can it be called a stage on the journey, being but barely four miles from the Diamond of Derry ; but 'tis no bad starting-place, either, for the river is easy enough to cross at Claudy Ford if the ferry-boat should not be running at Carrigans. My lord set forth about eleven of the clock, bidding me good-bye with many civil expressions of gratitude and pleasure at his entertainment, which sank me but the lower in my remorse for my remissness. Had there been another party to supper at Cloncalla that day, I warrant they had met with a sterner rule from the table-head.

They left Cloncalla, riding in two ranks of three, as they had come, my lord and Colonel Lundy riding in front with Captain Hamilton, and the other three gentlemen behind. Their servants had left an hour before, and were to await them at Strabane with their mails. They rode for a little time, as Captain Hamilton took occasion to tell me in the evening, in the same order as they left the house in, Colonel Lundy having most of the talk to himself, for my lord was something moody and inclined to muse. After awhile he roused himself, and very courteously desired Colonel Lundy of his goodness to ride behind with the other gentlemen, signifying his wish to have some private talk with Captain Hamilton. I could well have danced with pleasure at hearing that, for I took it to mean that my lord himself had some suspicion of his second in command ; wherein I was in error. But it must have displeased Lundy mightily, the born spy that he was, to ride behind and see them talking, and yet to hear no word of what they said.

Lord Mountjoy being thus left private with Captain Hamilton, began to speak to him of the conversation of the night before, at which my husband seized his opportunity, and expressed his regret that we and our guests had so far forgotten the consideration due to his known loyalty. My lord most graciously put that aside, as he had done to me, declaring almost in Captain Hamilton's own words of the morning that in such times, when public feeling ran so high, 'twas impossible to make men observe such restraints.

"But you," said he, "should have remembered that you stood in a different position from the most of them ; you held King James's commission, which the other offenders did not."

This was very true and could not be denied ; and so Captain

Hamilton expressed himself, though saying that some of those that spoke the plainest have held it very lately. At that they glanced into the debatable ground again, my lord endeavouring to prove, what I think he must have found something of the stiffest, that the King's meaning had been honest from the first, but partly thwarted by those that stood near the throne, and partly misunderstood by them that thought themselves threatened. Captain Hamilton, with all possible deference, endeavoured to justify his misgivings. At last my lord, in the friendliest manner that was possible under the circumstances, brought up my husband's unhappy speech concerning the possibility that he might be driven to exchange King James's service for that of the Prince of Orange. That, he said (and sure it was the case), was going further than any man in his situation had a right to do. His duty made it impossible to overlook it in one of his officers. He begged Mr. Hamilton to give him a positive assurance that he had spoken without reflection, carried away by the heat of the moment; or else he said he had no choice, save to desire him to resign his commission.

Could a man in my lord's situation be fairer or more forbearing? Had it been the case of a brother he was dealing with, could he have shown a friendlier desire to put safety within his reach? It was exactly true that what Captain Hamilton had said amiss had been let slip in an unguarded moment, utterly without consideration; so much he might have sworn, and done no violence to his conscience. But what must he do now—led, I must suppose, by some cross devil of independence—but to fall to justifying himself? Half the officers in the service, he told my lord, and far more than half the men, held the very same mind as he did. My lord himself had avowed sentiments that were but little short of his own. This was what he saw fit to say to his Colonel commanding, who had just *gone out of his way*, as they say, to open to him a door of retraction.

My lord Viscount at this grew perceptibly more haughty; so much might well have been foretold. He rebuked him in terms that were, perhaps, a thought too severe, considering the terms of friendship upon which they stood, going even so far as to say it was his duty to put Mr. Hamilton under arrest for a rebel, at which Mr. Hamilton bowed very low, and begged to know to which of the officers my lord chose he should surrender his sword.

Lord Mountjoy at this grew as white as the dead, and broke out with some expression of his personal regard for Mr. Hamilton that fairly took the heart from him for any further dispute. He begged his Colonel's pardon for all that he had said that had given him pain.

"But, sir," said he, "I should deal very uncandidly with you if I failed to tell you frankly at this moment, since things have gone so far, that I have had scruples for a long time about retaining that commission which you have just been talking of taking away from me. Perhaps, considering all that hath come and gone since we rid out of Derry yesterday, it will be best, after all, that your lordship should consider that I give it up to you this present minute; 'twill save you the trouble of depriving me of it if any word of our unhappy conversation should leak out."

"Have sense, sir," says Lord Mountjoy—"sense and foresight. Consider but how it will look if any word of your rashness doth leak out, that you gave up the King's service the next day. Will it not have all the appearance of premeditated treason? I fear 'tis my strict duty to deprive you without giving you the option to resign: but, man alive! don't I know you? I can't offer you such a dishonour, nor thrust you into such a risk. Why, then, should you insist upon doing so ill an office to yourself?"

Upon this they fell to arguing the point, whether it were wiser for Mr. Hamilton to resign his commission forthwith—indeed, he offered to deliver the paper itself into the hands of Colonel Lundy the next day, upon his return to Derry—or that he should retain it until such time as my lord himself returned from Dublin, when all risk of scath to them that had taken part in the seditious talk at our table might be supposed to have passed over. Lord Mountjoy was very strong for this latter course. Captain Hamilton, having once made up his mind to broach the subject of his resignation, was desirous (as his manner is) to have the matter over and done with as speedily as might be. For once, as the event proved, his impatience had been the better policy. The haste he would have used had brought, no doubt, its own dangers; but the delay which my lord recommended was but a stumbling course—a hesitation that had well-nigh proved fatal to both him and Mr. Hamilton. But he being so anxious that Captain Hamilton should submit to be guided, and there being some reparation due to him, as well as some deference, my husband ended by accepting his advice, agreeing to continue in command of his company until my

lord's return from Dublin, and of his own accord promising to keep clear of politics in the meantime.

My lord, upon his side, undertook to receive Captain Hamilton's commission immediately upon his return, if he were still minded to surrender it, and promised to say nothing to my Lord Deputy which should in any way prejudice my husband, should he by that time have changed his mind, and be desirous to continue in the service.

"Though sure," said he to me, as he finished his account of the conversation, "there was no need for him to say a word about that. If I trusted him not so far, there's no power in the world should make me delay my resignation a single day."

As for me, with all the faith in the world in my lord's kind intention, it was as though a leaden weight had been laid upon my heart. Never a word had my husband said to me of his intention to resign; not even that morning, when it had been a cordial to me. At the first word of it, I felt it was the one way out of the false position he had put himself into, for, once clear of the King's service, he would be no worse situate than Sir Arthur Rawdon or Mr. Skeffington. It was on my very lips to ask him why he had permitted himself to be over-ruled. But seeing that it was too late then to mend his error, I was even fain to hold my tongue, save that I besought him once more, as he left me to get to horse in the evening, to be cautious, careful to folly even, prudent to cowardice, as he had said in the morning. At my earnestness he fell to laughing, calling me all the names of a coward in a kind of loving blame, and asking me if I thought he was like to be entrapped into some act of overt rebellion in the next fortnight? And so he rid away to Derry through the dusk, leaving a heavy heart and an anxious behind him.

I strove to put away my fears, and to look at what had passed as he did; but in spite of myself I was tormented by an instinctive foreboding of mischance, such as we women have a prescriptive right to. Men laugh at us for them; but sure 'tis themselves they ought to laugh at sometimes for being too uplifted to profit by them. They are stronger than we, and no doubt wiser, as they say: but yet it were well for them if they should submit to be warned now and then by those very forebodings that they laugh at.

As I turned to go back into the house, I caught sight of a spider's web on one of the bushes, in one corner whereof there was a fly struggling helplessly for its freedom. The spider,

gorged, I suppose, left it to struggle at its will, secure that it could not break loose and escape. It was even but too faithful an image, to my mind, of Captain Hamilton's case—enmeshed between his written bond and his spoken promise, and helpless to break forth to freedom ; nay, hindered by his given word from so much as a single effort for it.

Moved by I scarce know what folly, I put my finger delicately beneath the fly and carefully set it free. It prinked itself for awhile where I placed it, and then flew away into the dusk. If it escaped the other spiders' webs that were spread for wandering flies, little doubt but the cold put a speedy end to its poor life.

"But yet," said I to myself, "it hath a chance to live to its natural term."

Then, laughing at my own foolishness, I went into the house, striving to forget my dread in the thousand nothings that make up a woman's life.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEREIN TWO IRISH BLACKGUARDS, A GREAT AND A SMALL, MAKE
THEIR APPEARANCE AT CLONCALLY.

I SCARCE looked to see my husband again till after Lord Mountjoy's return from Dublin, except, perhaps, for an hour upon some day when he had time to ride out to Cloncally and back again to Derry. It was therefore with the keenest pleasure that I got word, on the Saturday morning of the next week after my lord's departure, that he had his leave for the Sunday, and might be expected that night to pass the four-and-twenty hours in his own house. The one compensation for our many partings was our many meetings. Sure, there is no joy on earth like the first sight of a beloved face after a time of separation. This time, following quicker upon his last visit than I had any right to hope, his coming had a special grace.

To show a due sense of it, as well as to gain a few minutes of his company, I set forth about three of the clock in the afternoon to meet him, taking Roland in my hand. The day was lowering and gusty, drawing down, as I thought, to rain; and when we had passed out of the shelter of the garden wall, so raw a wind met us full in the face, blowing from the north-west across the river, that I thought it not wise to face it with the child. I paused for a minute or two on the bridge across the little brawling stream that runs down through the wilderness into the Foyle, looking beneath my lifted hand towards the Waterside of Derry, if so I might descry him on the road. But there was no sign of him, and I was turning away, with my eyes still upon the distance, when Roland pulled at my skirt.

"Boy!" said he to me. "Boy under ze tree."

His observation is extraordinary quick for a child of his age. I looked where he pointed, and there truly, under one of the ragged bushes that skirts the course of the brook, lay what might well have passed for a heap of rags. I had never marked it, save for Roland ; but it was no weather to leave a human being sleeping out of doors. Whether he had lain down from sickness or merely from laziness, 'twas clearly my duty to rouse him up. I went towards him, and presently could make out that he was a lad of perhaps twelve years. Roland, who seemed mightily taken with him, could make out something more.

"Boy dot round spots on him's face," said he.

This was true, or, rather, it had been truer had he said round holes ; for the face of the lad was most pitifully scarred with the small-pox, seeing which I bade Roland keep the other side of the road while I roused him up. 'Tis an illness I have little mind to catch. So I kept my hands by my sides, and merely spoke to the sleeper. It was a hard and a cold couch he had chosen, but for all that his slumbers were as deep as if he had lain on down. I called to him half a dozen times before he stirred and sat up. Then I asked him how he could be rash enough to go to sleep out of doors in such a wind.

"Sure, 'tis safe enough," replied the small rascal, rubbing a pair of very little bright-blue eyes, "whin the good angels is goin' about."

"The good angels won't prevent you from taking a chill if you do such foolish things," said I.

"Och ! yes," said he, with a grin that was something of the widest, yet pleasant somehow in spite of its dimensions. "Och ! yes ; wan of them comes and wakens you up whin the cold's beginnin' to catch on to ye."

"What, you monkey !" said I, "have you learnt so soon to flatter ?"

"Not a bit, me lady," said he with a comical earnestness. "Av ye haven't come from hivin, sure it's because ye carry it about wid ye wherever ye go."

"Get up this minute," said I, for the lad was still seated on the damp earth ; "get up, and tell me how long it is since you had the small-pox."

"'Twas in the cold weather," said he ; "in the spring-time, I mean. I was up and about by the time the days were warm and long."

Hearing that, I was no longer afraid to touch him.

"Get up at once from the ground," said I, taking his hand, "and tell me how you came to go to sleep in such a place."

"Och! my lady," said he, and very frail and little he appeared when at last he stood on his feet, though older, I thought, than I had at first supposed—"och! 'tis pretty aisy tired I am ivver since the faver, an' it was weary, weary I was when my father left me to go up to the house, so I sat down where he left me, under the tree; an' it's the truth I'm tellin' ye, an' not a bit of a lie, I never knew I was aslape till you wakened me up. Sure, my lady, I wouldn't desave you!" said he very earnestly, fancying, no doubt, that I looked upon his falling asleep on my premises as a kind of blameworthy trespass.

"Is it to Clonally your father has gone?" I asked him.

"'Tis to the great house, any way," said he. "'Tis to see the Captain he came."

"Captain Hamilton?" said I.

"Sure, it's meself that doesn't know his name," said the lad; "but the jantleman that lives in there," pointing to Clonally.

"Then, my boy," said I, taking Roland by the hand, "you had better walk up to the great house with us. You will find your father there, no doubt; and, indeed, you'll rest more safely beside the kitchen-fire than under a blackthorn bush in weather like this;" for even as I spoke to him I saw the poor lad shiver in the damp wind.

We set forth, therefore, without further delay. I could well have laughed at the fixedness of Roland's eyes, which he kept as firmly set upon the lad as one that hath been brought under a spell. In truth, he scarce endured to hold my hand, because when he did so I came between him and the object of his wonder.

"Werry funny boy," said he in a tone of reverent satisfaction.

To me he seemed, on the contrary, a very miserable one. He was either footsore or so extremely weary that he could scarce set one foot before the other. 'Tis a thing I never could abide, to see a child in pain, and so I offered him my hand that was free; it was, at least, a little help.

"Werry funny boy," repeated Roland, peeping round my skirts; and as he said the word, there rose with a startling suddenness from the side of the road that hath no fence a man that was anything but "funny," being, indeed, the most evil-looking ruffian that ever I saw so near. I had some ado to

avoid letting him see how little I liked the situation, for, indeed, my heart fluttered and beat to my very great discomfort.

"My father," said the little lad beside me by way of explanation.

The man stopped us in a manner that was short to very insolence, much different from the fawning way these low Irishmen commonly use to the Englishry. He seemed a very typical specimen of the sort, with the low, receding brow, short nose, showing too much of the nostril, small cunning eyes, long cheeks and chin, wide, cruel mouth, and for clothing such rags, so foul and tattered, as my people had scarce endured to see upon a scarecrow. Here was a pretty figure to frighten a lady. The boy, though poor and thinly clad, seemed yet a creature of another race than his father's.

"When will the Captain be at home?" asked the man, without the least courtesy of "av ye plaze" or "by your lave," and even without removing his hat, which latter omission my son, my little champion, was quick to notice and rebuke.

"Off 'oo hat, bad man!" shouted he, with a stamp of his little foot, and in a voice of so much authority that I could scarce forbear to smile, considering the size of him that assumed it.

With that smile came my courage pricking back into my heart, like the blood into the skin when one hath been nigh to fainting.

"The child is right," said I very coolly. "No man that hath any respect for himself forgets to uncover when he speaks to a lady."

He took off his hat mighty awkwardly, and with the act of deference it was evident that his insolence began to ebb. With that, my courage rising the higher as his declined, I began to question him about the business that brought him to Cloncalla, concerning which he was far from communicative; but learning that he had walked five or six miles to see Captain Hamilton, I thought it a pity that he should be baulked of it for the matter of half an hour's waiting. I therefore directed him to give his son his arm and follow me to the house, both of which he did, though with something the air of one that was astonished at himself. For my own part, I, too, was something astonished at myself, for though we were in mine own premises, it was hardly likely that any of my people should be within call should I have

need of them. And certes, in spite of the face I contrived to put upon my cowardice, the courage in my heart was of the thinnest. I had much ado to forbear imagining a bare skean in the hand of the Ultogh behind me, and once or twice it seemed as though I had a marvellous clear idea of what 'twere like to feel one in the back.

But, presently, for all my fears, we came safe and sound to the house-door, where, having summoned Cargill, I gave him charge to see my two Irishmen safe bestowed in the kitchen and something given them to eat. At this, not a little to my chagrin, a new difficulty arose; for Roland refused to be parted from the "boy," and clamoured to be permitted to take him to his nursery. I a little demurred to it at the first, but Roland begged so earnestly that, being assured that more than six months had passed since the other had been sick of the "faver," as they called it, I gave my consent. The lad's face spoke for him powerfully, being both good-natured and intelligent. [His clothes, though poor and worn to a degree, were cleaner than his father's, and showed some sign of a mending hand, whereat I much wondered till I heard from him that his mother was of the Englishry, at which, sure, I wondered more than ever how such an one could have so lowered herself as to become the wife of a man like him before me. I was myself something taken with the lad, and under Margery's sharp eyes he could do no harm to Roland; so, as I say, I consented to allow him to go to the nursery and not to the kitchen.

The father, one might well have supposed, would be pleased with the notice taken of his son. Perhaps he was; at any rate, his evil scowl was transformed into a kind of grin, but the grin was so much more evil than the scowl, being less germane to the face, that I could endure his neighbourhood no longer, and so hurried away after the children.

Willing to make some explanation to Margery of the coming of so strange a guest, I followed them into the nursery, to find that her good heart needed none, beyond the evident weariness of the lad. She had seated him already in an elbow-chair, where truly he seemed much at his ease. He had just told her his name, which was one no less Irish than Gorman O'Cahan; he seemed, indeed, to have all the will to tell us whatever we chose to ask him of himself. I was pleased with his openness; I was pleased with his civil manners, marvelling, indeed, no little at the same until

he told us his mother was of the English, when the wonder ceased. The poor lad, though he had a misfortune in his father, had no doubt a heaven's blessing in his mother; we could discern it more and more evidently in every word he spoke. A towardly lad he was, and one that his mother had no need to blush for, and in his apprehension, as I thought, quick beyond the common.

Roland broke in upon the questioning, coming suddenly out of his closet of toys, where he had been searching by himself, with a jack-in-the-box of the most extreme ugliness in his hand. He caused it to play up and down in its box with much satisfaction to himself.

"Zis is 'oo," said he to the little Irishman. "Werry like 'oo!"

"Sure, 'tis flattherin' me the little jantleman is!" said Gorman, with the completest enjoyment of the jest, and with a glance so comical that Margery and I broke out into a fit of laughter, for, indeed, the puppet was so hideous that to describe Roland's saying as "flattery" was no bad jest, and I felt my heart warm still more to the lad thereat. One of an ill nature, I thought, had certainly taken it amiss to be compared to such a monster.

I left the nursery with the children's laughter ringing in mine ears; sure, there is no sound like it for music in the world. At the door of mine own chamber I found Cargill, who had been there to seek me; it was to tell me that the Irishman desired speech of me.

"And what about," said he, "I'm sure-I don't know, unless 'tis to complain of his supper. Indeed, madam, he's just the worst-looking blackguard that ever I clapped eyes on, and that's a pretty long word, too," says he, "when a man has lived nigh upon twenty years in Ireland."

For Cargill was born and brought up in England, and so hath even a greater contempt for the Irishry than we of the colony, who know that there be good and bad among them. But this O'Cahan was of the worse sort—his looks proclaimed it—and as he stood before me again in the hall, I wondered more than ever what spell he had used to induce a woman of the Englishry to become his wife. From my heart I pitied her, the mismated creature, for that she was one of the better sort the bringing up of her son was sufficient proof.

That which the man desired to say to me was no complaint, but a question—to wit, if I certainly looked for Captain Hamil-

ton's coming that night? His business, he said, was pressing, and scarce would brook the delay he had already been led into; if the Captain's coming was doubtful, he would walk on to Derry, where he would be certain to find either him or some other of the officers of the garrison. This showed me in a moment that it was regimental business he was after, but even as he said it, there came to our ears the sound of my husband's voice speaking to the grooms that were in waiting. Both I and the Irishman went toward the door, and as we reached it Captain Hamilton opened it from without and entered.

"Ah, sweetheart!" quoth he, seeing me; "sure, 'tis a cure for sore eyes, and sore heart as well, to find you expecting a man at the very door." And so he would have taken me in his arms, but suddenly he saw the Irishman standing at his elbow. "Who's this?" he asked, in the sharp, imperious way he hath with him. 'Tis a trick most officers acquire sooner or later.

"Well," said I, "'tis a man that hath been waiting here for an hour or more to see you, but what his business is I don't know."

Captain Hamilton looked at the man from head to foot in a way that seemed little friendly.

"What, *another* of them?" said he, in a tone so full of anger and vexation that I gazed at him. "Hark ye, my man! are you an Irishman of Ulster, desirous to enlist in my company of Lord Mountjoy's regiment of foot? and have you a letter to me from his Reverence Dean Manby that is to tell me all about the matter?"

"Your honour's a witch of a guesser!" said the man, in some surprise.

"I'm right, then? Well, you can go back to the Dean, and tell him from me—— Or, stay; I'd better read the letter. There may be some reason in this one, or something in the nature of an apology—who knows?" said he bitterly.

But having read the letter, 'twas plain that he found nothing of the sort in it, for he spoke with much severity to the man.

"Go back to Dean Manby," said he, "and tell him—with my compliments, mind that!—that I've no vacancies in my company, and that I've no mind to make them as he desires—by cashiering loyal Protestant men. I'd write you a note, my man, but it's quite unnecessary; he will hold you blameless, for he hath had the same message from me five times in the last two days, in writing and by word of mouth."

The man muttered something that I failed to catch, it being in the Irish tongue, which I do not understand. But Captain Hamilton speaks it a little, being country-bred, and he caught this that the man said, and answered it in the English.

"Make us pay for our pride, did ye say? And when, may I ask, and how?" said he.

Finding himself understood, which he had not looked for, the Irishman began to try to explain away what he had said. This was, as I knew, the sure way to anger Captain Hamilton to the point of actual violence; he doth so hate and condemn cringing and deceitfulness. I thought it well to interpose, therefore, and did so, speaking to him of his son, and desiring to know if he were going straight home, to which he answered: "No, but into Derry, to have speech of the Dean." At that I asked him to leave the lad at Cloncall, promising to send him home early the next day, for, indeed, he was too frail and weary to set out on such a toilsome journey at so late an hour.

"'Tis a troublesome wake crater he is," said the man, "ivver since he had the faver."

He looked so ill-conditioned as he spoke, and even when he fell to expressing his gratitude for the offer, that I was thankful for the poor boy's sake to have leave to keep him. Had I known what was before us, truly I had been thankful for mine own, and for the sake of all and every one that I held dear; for the friendships done by Gorman O'Cahan to me and mine—ay, and to the city, and to the kingdom—since that day have out-weighed that poor bounty of a night's lodging by many and many a thousand-fold.

As the man turned from the door, a groom that stood thereby, waiting no doubt his master's orders, was heard to wish "bad luck to him for a scoundrelly rap."

"And what's the use of that, now?" said Captain Hamilton. "Is it to anger the man you would like?"

"Did you hear what he said, sir?" asked the groom, saluting, but with a strange flash in his eyes.

"No, what was it?" said his master.

"He said, sir—'twas in the Irish, and under his breath, but I caught it—'They'll all be beneath our feet before long, and then we'll *grind them*;' and sure, he ground his heel on the doorstep as if we'd been beneath it then!"

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THE SITUATION IS REGARDED FROM TWO SEVERAL
POINTS OF VIEW.

IT was perfectly evident that Mr. Hamilton was extremely discomposed; for without taking the least notice of the merry laughter that was ringing through the house from the nursery, he walked straight past the door of it into his own room.

"Gad!" said he, turning to me, "I'd give something to be at the bottom of this insolence on the part of the Irish."

"That man's insolence was sure uncommon," said I. "I never saw the like before."

"It's little I'd care for him, and all the rest of his equals," said Mr. Hamilton. "If they got beyond bounds, 'twould mean no more than treating them to a good beating, to bring them back to their senses; there's no great difficulty in that, that ever I could hear! But the thing I mistrust is the backing they must know of; never a man of the Irishry would dare behave like that in the house of an English gentleman unless he were sure of his backing! To be sure, there's no secret made of it that it's at Tyrconnel's orders they're moving heaven and earth to bring them into the army. But that's a trifle in comparison with such assurance as this; it points to nothing less than an understanding between themselves—for as wretched scullogues as they are—and people in the highest quarters!"

"But that's no news!" said I. "We have known for many a day that my Lord Deputy and all his friends would like nothing better than to turn the world about, as I might turn a sand-glass. We have the Irish under our hand at present, but it's pleased the Lords of the Pale would be to set their feet on our neck, ah! and

no less pleased to see their countrymen, down to the lowest, setting their feet there too. But, dear ! " said I, bent on turning my husband's thoughts to the hopeful side, " the side that hath the upper hand can surely keep it ; and what's to fear ? "

" What would be to fear, my wife," said he, " if one were to undermine the foundations of his ramparts ? "

" Why, to be sure they would upset," said I. " But there's never a man in the whole world so great a fool."

" Is there not, indeed ? " said he, laughing. But the laugh had so little mirth that it daunted me more than his dismay. " That's good hearing, now ! for by what I've seen myself I'd have said it was the very folly that half the Englishry of the province are bent on bringing to pass."

" What do you mean ? " said I.

" Well, Tyrconnel's mind toward us is well enough known, as you said but one minute ago. A Papist of the Papists is Tyrconnel, an Irishman of the Irish ; he owes us no love by his own showing, and 'tis a fact that he bears us none. It would be the best day of his life if he could contrive to turn the world about, as you expressed it, set his countrymen where we stand, and lower us out of our place into theirs, or worse than that. And his master is of one mind with him, not a whit more friendly. He'd be as pleased as Tyrconnel to see the back of the last Protestant in Ireland."

" Sure enough ! " said I. " The thing is matter of notoriety. But sure, the very openness of their hatred robs it of its danger ; forewarned is forearmed, all the world over."

" Wouldn't you say so ? " said he. " Would you ever think that men that knew so well what to look for, should the wrong side come uppermost again, would listen for a moment to his blandishments ? 'Tis enough to make a man believe in witchcraft, but I tell you the truth, Mary ; he hath set himself to disarm the Protestants, and they're willing, to all appearance, to set their own hand to the deed. Ah, would you think that, knowing what they know of the Lord Deputy, they'd let him wheedle their weapons out of their hands ? "

" 'Tis clear if they do," said I, " that the world is altered since Solomon writ his Proverbs. ' Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. ' "

" So he said, indeed," said Captain Hamilton. " But the wisest of men would see reason to change his mind were he going

about this day in the Province of Ulster, or else there be men more foolish than the fowls. The blindness they show passes understanding."

"But how?" I asked of him, a little frightened in spite of myself.

"Well, this that you've seen to-day is a part of it," said he. "You know the changes that have been made of late in the Corporation of Derry, of course?"

"Cormack O'Neill is made the Mayor," said I. "I know that."

"Yes, he is," replied Captain Hamilton; "he is. And what right hath he to it, I'd like to know, except his name, which is Irish, and his leanings, which are all Tyrconnel's way? But he's no more than an Irish mayor set up to guide a tribe of Irish councillors; for there's not a man left that's not more Irish than English, and that, mark you, could never have been brought about by the Government except with the town's consent."

"Any man that is not foolish," said I, "can see well enough what that tends to bring about."

"One would say so, at least," said he; "but yet he hath no more to do than to begin his piping, and they're all dancing presently to the tune he likes. And having succeeded in that move—I dare say far beyond his hopes—here comes the next. The army must be cleared of Protestants and filled with Papists; and once that's accomplished, the end's at hand. When the wolves have the care of the sheep, the rending and ravening's not far off, take my word for it."

"Well, and if they should submit to have such watch-dogs foisted on them," said I, "they'd have none to blame but themselves. But the Lord Deputy hath gone too far at last, I should fancy. He hath begun a measure now that no man will dance to, let him charm as wisely as he may."

"I would I could think so," said Captain Hamilton; "but the news of every morning gives the lie to such a hope. The drafting goes on apace, I can tell you. The Rapparees have been sent to us by dozens and scores since ever Mountjoy was ordered to Dublin, and every man of them recommended by some Catholic of note—men, I declare to you, Mary, that have scarce learnt yet to walk abroad in the sunshine, 'tis so lately they went in fear of a halter."

"But the Catholics of note will soon tire of that game," said I,

"when they find their rascals returned upon their hands like bad money."

"But that's just what they're not," said he. "If they were, then all were going as we'd have it, we that have the good of the country at heart. There's scarce a man but has taken them on as fast as they have applied. Lundy himself hath made room for every Catholic that hath been sent to him, and is turning off the Protestants—it's the truth I'm telling you—to make room for them."

It surprised me no whit to hear this of Colonel Lundy, though I meant not that my husband should divine it. But he did, and fell at once to excusing him.

"Oh, I know what you're thinking, Mary, for all so innocent a face as you wear; but you're wrong. He's no traitor, I'm sure; but in this matter he's misled, like many another honest man. Sure, he hath Tyrconnel's orders, sent direct to himself, I believe, since Mountjoy's not in Derry. He's staunch enough, but he hath no stomach for controversy; he wants to humour the great folk that have fortune in their gift as far as ever he can with safety."

"Call that staunch?" said I, before I recollected myself.

"Ah, well," said Captain Hamilton, "let him that is without sin among us cast the first stone at him. There's not a man of us," said he, who is himself far more apt to defy the powers that be than to truckle to them—"there's not a man of us but would like to keep well with headquarters could it be done. But Lundy's short-sighted in this affair; he can't see how unlikely it is that this Government should ever show favour to a Protestant were he never so abject, and he's taking a stick to break his own back in filling his regiment with Papists at any man's bidding. The next thing will be that, the ranks being Papist, they won't brook the command of a Protestant, and then the officers will be cashiered to make room for Catholics to suit the men."

"Perhaps he'll even qualify for a command under such circumstances as these," said I.

Truly I know not what urged me to speak so to Captain Hamilton of one that I desired to see thrust out of his confidence; but so I did, and had my reward forthwith, as, indeed, I might have known.

"Now, Mary," said Mr. Hamilton, "you're most unfair to Lundy, and I'm sure I don't know why, for he's civil to a fault

to every lady. But give me leave to say to you plainly for once that your suspicions of him are perfect nonsense. No, no! I may say to you in private that I think he carries compliance too far; and, faith! I told him the same thing to his face no longer ago than this very afternoon. But he's as good a Protestant as any of us. I'm certain he'd quit his command in an instant if he thought that honour required it. But," added he, after a pause, "it's an irritating thing, after all, to see him deliberately putting it out of his own power and out of the power of his friends to do anything else."

A man convinced against his will, as the saying goes, is of the same opinion still. And sure 'tis no less true of a woman, though, indeed, I had been very happy to be convinced in this matter if I could. My dear and generous husband! even while I grieved for his excess of confidence, I loved it. He were less himself, and therefore less lovable, if he were more prudent; and perhaps the advantage were too dearly purchased at the price. For all that, he that can see no man with his back to the wall without an impulse to take his stand beside him is like to give his wife many an anxious moment.

"Well," said I, letting him have his way, "and what course do you mean to hold yourself? Are you going forth to meet the trouble, or to wait for it at home? Though, after all, what you have done already leaves you little choice; your conduct to this very man is pretty like to bring about your ears the whole set that are for compliance."

"Faith and indeed!" said he, "and that's about all the good it hath done, I fear. A man can do but little for or against unless he hold a more important command than mine. But as to what I'll do in the future, that matter pretty well settles itself. I hold my commission under protest, as you know, and only until Mountjoy's return; I shall deliver it into his hands as soon as ever 'tis decent after he comes back. Then, being free of it, 'twill go hard but with the assistance of those I know of that are of the right way of thinking, we get something effectual set on foot for the defence of the province. We've had our warning; there are plenty that have no desire to sit with their hands folded waiting for their fate."

This conversation, and yet more my husband's manner herein, so unwontedly serious, left a deep impression on my mind—deeper, truly, than on his own, for all the seriousness was gone by the

next afternoon when he rid back into Derry. I begged him for all sakes, when he was leaving the house, to remember his promise to me, and use every possible caution, at which he fell to laughing, and told me "'twas plain his neck was dearer to me than to himself, since I suffered such constant fear lest he should put it in peril."

"And if it be," said I—"as I would not wonder but it may—is there aught in that to blame?"

"Keep a quiet mind, sweetheart," quoth he. "It hath a certain value, even to myself."

And so rid away, waving his hand.

"A merry-hearted gentleman as one could wish to see," said a voice beside the doorway. And this was the voice of Rabbie Wilson, who, having nothing to do on the Sabbath afternoon, had come out to see his master ride away. "Ay, madam," continued he, observing that I marked him; "he's the very same e'en noo that I mind him when he was a callan'; there was never a thing sae fashious but he'd tak' it lauchin'."

"It's a habit I've thought at times that it would be good if he could lay aside," said I.

For the times when I have the gravest doubts whether 'tis justifiable to treat serious matters lightly are those when Captain Hamilton takes that way in speaking of my fears.

"It's a thoct pagan, maybe," said Rabbie; "but there's a fine rantin' gallantry about it that's gey an' pleasin', too. Ay, my leddy, I'd be gey an' sweered to see the maister tak' his bit o' fashes like ither fowk, wi' the tear in's e'e."

I, making meditation afterwards of all that had come and gone, and all that was like to come to pass, was one moment of his mind, and the next of my own. But things being as they were in Ulster, I think mine own had the uppermost at last, for a man's graces will not mend his neck should his gallantry lay it on the block.

This visit of Captain Hamilton's took place on the last Sunday of October; and it was about the Wednesday following, if my memory serve me aright, that there came an orderly soldier to Cloncall, bringing a letter to me from Lord Mountjoy. This was to say that he was on his way from Strabane to Derry, and desired to know if he might go about to Cloncall and sup with us. It was as though my very wish had been consulted, for had I been asked what favour I should desire of Providence, it had been no other than that Mr. Hamilton should have an opportunity to tell

my lord Viscount of his conduct in the affair of these Irish recruits before Colonel Lundy had his ear. Accordingly, having despatched the orderly in the one direction, I lost no time in despatching a groom in the other with a letter to let Mr. Hamilton know whom I expected, and to desire he would bring whom he pleased to bear him company at supper. No sooner was he gone out of earshot and past recall than I began to repent me of an error; for, indeed, it was one, considering what I had at heart, to mention my lord by name. I might have been sure enough, and so I was, that if Lundy and he had come to words about the drafting, it was Lundy Captain Hamilton would invite to be his guest, so to avoid the look of taking an advantage of him. And so it proved, for when my husband rid into the court in the afternoon it was Colonel Lundy that rid beside him. Nor was there any doubt but something was amiss betwixt them, for whereas they had been wont to treat each other with some familiarity, they were now as full of ceremony as men that are newly acquainted.

"Faith and indeed!" I thought to myself, "I have contrived to throw away the good that Providence set ready to my hand."

Captain Hamilton bade me expect Wamphray Murray and Rosa to supper; but when Rosa arrived, it was not my brother that accompanied her, but her own, Wamphray desiring to be excused on account of an engagement that could not be postponed. This arrangement was none so disappointing to me as it might have been at another time, Mr. Browning having an authority and weight with him that Mr. Murray is something short of; and sure was I that if my husband's conduct should be viewed unfriendly (which yet I scarce dreaded), the influence of Mr. Browning would be thrown upon the side of the balance.

Lord Mountjoy's arrival followed hard upon theirs. To my surprise, he was alone, save for his servant and half a dozen soldiers of his escort. He was full of the news he brought—that the regiment was ordered to Dublin without delay. It had been affecting news to me had I been ignorant of Captain Hamilton's intention to resign; and so it was to Rosa, who was so. But as things stood, I was little moved by it. I was busy watching my lord, who on his part was busy watching his two officers; methought he was little surprised at the distance they observed to one another. No doubt he was prepared for something of the sort. For himself, he had plenty of talk, as he always hath, and it lacked

neither point nor wit. But to mine ear there was something in the voice that fitted neither to the matter nor to the manner of what he said. My lord, I thought, was putting a strain upon himself to seem the very same as usual; and even the men, that are for the most part (God help them!) but surface observers, were quickly aware of it. Perhaps there was that in the mind of each that opened his eyes for once. Once or twice, observing my lord Viscount, I saw his eyes dwell on Mr. Hamilton's face with that strange expression that on his former visit it had baffled my wit to fathom. This time also it both disquieted me and puzzled me; it was a riddle beyond my guessing; but none the less I was sure in my heart that its import was of evil, and evil that my lord would fain avert had he the power.

Whatever the danger, little doubt but frankness was an innocent man's best shield; and to give him the opportunity to exercise it, I very early left the gentlemen to their wine.

But Rosa and I had not been by ourselves above half an hour, when, something to my wonder, Lord Mountjoy followed us into the withdrawing-room. It is little his custom to leave his wine so early.

Presently, with one of those charming compliments which he knows so well how to turn, he escorted Rosa to the harpsichord; she is known for one that hath a talent that way, and it seemed, as he manœuvred it, the most natural thing in the world that he should wish to hear her play. "'Tis with her he desires to speak, then," thought I, it being clear enough that he had not followed without some reason. But, having beat time very civilly with his hand for a minute or two, he left her, and came back to where I sat. "Ah!" thought I, "'tis with me." And remembering his looks at the table, I knew further that he came to speak with me about my husband. Some inner impulse prompted me to tell him that I divined his wish.

"I see you wish to speak to me apart, my lord," said I; "and if I'm not mistaken, 'tis about Captain Hamilton."

"You are right, madam, in both particulars," said he; "though I'm at a loss to think how you divined the last. Sure, to be sure, that you ladies have the hearts of men so universally at your feet, that it's no wonder if you read them like an open book."

'Tis his lordship's way, as I said a minute ago, to turn a pretty compliment whenever he hath the chance; but this one rang something flat—it was as if his tongue spoke it without the guidance

of his mind. Then he fell to musing, like one that scarce knows how to open the matter he hath in hand.

Thinking to lessen his difficulty, I began to speak of the friendship that subsists between himself and Captain Hamilton.

"If one that is in the house to-night had said as much," said I, "I might fear to hear more. But I know I can trust your friendship for Captain Hamilton to speak of him as I would desire; or as I might myself, that know him the best of men."

"Madam, you may," said he, and paused again. "I am about to speak of my friend to my friend's wife," said he at last, speaking the word "friend" with some force. "And that's what daunts me." And at the words he looked me in the face with an expression so strange upon his own that I in turn was daunted, and sat silent.

"Don't be afraid," said he, quickly. "There's no cause, or at least not much, if you will show yourself as brave and prudent as I think you. I am about to put mine honour into your hands, Mrs. Hamilton," he continued, lifting his eyes to mine. Question met question there; and yet it was not so much a question mine were full of, as an answer to that which he had said—an answer that my tongue strove in vain to frame. Being unable for all my striving to find a word to say, I bowed my head for answer, a gesture that satisfied him. "'Tis safe there, I am well assured," said he.

Then, with a sudden change of voice and manner, he went on quickly:

"But there's no time to lose; I must get back to the table before the others fall to wondering at my absence. It's very strange, Mrs. Hamilton, and raises all manner of suspicions in my mind, but the Lord Deputy hath had news of the conversation that passed at supper, that night I lay here on my way to Dublin."

It did not greatly surprise me to hear it; I thought I could have laid my hand upon the sender, and was on the very brink of saying so. Then I bethought me of my husband's opinion, and held my tongue.

"He is much incensed against Hamilton, and I must admit he hath some reason," continued my lord Viscount. "For he spoke most foolishly, considering his position, and that supposing his opinions were undoubtedly true, which they're not. I had much difficulty—but that's no matter now. Something new must have

come to Tyrconnel's ears since I left him ; for this very day, as I was leaving Strabane, I was overtook by an express, desiring I would send Hamilton to Dublin under a strong guard, and that without delay."

"I knew it!" said I, half choking. "'Tis this new matter of the Irish recruits. Ah, Lord Mountjoy, didn't I forecast evil in my heart from the first moment I knew he was remaining in the regiment in your absence? I was sure some harm would come of it."

"Irish recruits!" said he. "*What* Irish recruits?—this is all news to me. But 'tis no matter now," he went on, not waiting for an explanation. "The thing is to save him; he couldn't remain in the service any way. Madam, if I send him to Dublin there's but one end to it."

"I know," I said. "Lord Russell's—Algernon Sydney's."

He nodded.

"They're savage," said he. "Their best friends can't deny it. But it's a hard service to require of a man, to deliver up his friend to his death, and that for a piece of mere folly of the tongue; for I do think that his words had no purpose behind them—then."

"Of treason, or of sedition," said I, "none! Why, 'twas not until your lordship called him to account for them that he so much as thought of throwing up his commission."

"You're sure of that?" he asked of me.

"Perfectly sure," I replied to him.

"Ah!" said he, "that goes far to settle the matter, then; that's what I've been turning back and forth in my mind all day. Madam, I fear 'tis only too plain where my duty lies; I've had orders from them I'm bound to obey." At that it seemed as if my heart would have stopped beating; and as for my Lord Mountjoy, I thought he was but little less agitated than I. "But I can't do it!" he broke out; "no, not though my refusal set me in his place. Your words have assured me of the thing I feared, that 'twas I that kept him within their power. By mine honour, I had no thought therein but for his own good! But for all that, except for me he'd have been free of his commission before ever Tyrconnel heard a word to his disadvantage. I can't have it on my mind that I first tied his hands—however unwittingly—and then sent him to Dublin, like a rat in a trap, to his death. No, not for all Tyrconnel's honours. I'll give him a

chance to make his escape; and, madam, 'tis to this end I ask your help."

"How?" I asked. It was with the greatest difficulty I formed the single word, for my lips and throat seemed as wooden as those of any puppet, and all but refused to answer to my will.

"Very simply," said he. "I will quarrel with him to-night—here, in his own house—on some pretence or other. I will order him to his own room under arrest. It will be your business to get him away before the morning."

"I'll do it," said I, feeling my courage come back with a rush, the moment I knew the thing I had to do.

"Understand me," said my lord, with that in his voice which was both pleading and commanding. "'Tis out of no sympathy with his views I'm doing this. Had I relieved him of his commission when he desired it, I make little doubt he'd have been riding up and down the country by this time, organising some sedition, but none so easy to lay hands on. He's a man that doesn't stand still, as you know. He'll get himself into further scrapes, I am very sure; and then, should I take him, 'twill be out of my power to show him favour. My duty is to the King, my master, whom he hath renounced. I may say it has been a difficulty of the hardest to choose between them this time. And if 'twere going to anything less than certain death——"

"My Lord Mountjoy," said I, "I scarce can wonder at your scruples; and I scarce can thank you for your decision. It is life to me, as well as to Captain Hamilton—that's all. If ever I can repay you—but that's impossible."

He bent and kissed my hand.

"We part friends to-night," said he, "whatever the fortunes of the times may turn us to."

"Never anything but friends!" said I, "while I remember the kindness you've done to me and mine this day."

He rose to go; but after what had passed between us, there was that in my heart that forbade me to let him go unwarned. Mistaken I might be, it was even likely, but to keep silence with such a suspicion brooding in my mind had sure been flat ingratitude.

"My lord," said I, "one moment. My mind misgives about one that is at your side. Perhaps I ought not to say so, but I can't be thankless enough to keep back a warning that hath the least chance of being of use to you. Be wary in your dealings

with Colonel Lundy. 'Tis he, I do think, that hath betrayed our conversation to the Lord Deputy."

"What makes you think so?" said he, knitting his brows.

"Ask a woman for her reason!" said I. "I have none that can be put into words, but the next time he asks you a question that you would not answer to one you thought unfriendly, look you in his eyes, and be guided by what you see therein."

"I think you're wrong," said he, musing. "Lundy's staunch enough to his friends, though he hath a queer way of crying with the hounds and running with the hare. I think he is safe, Mrs. Hamilton."

"It can harm none to use caution," said I.

"No," said he; "but 'tis unnecessary, I'm persuaded." And so left the room, without another word.

CHAPTER VI.

A QUARREL AND AN ARREST.

ROSA turned round about in her seat by the harpsichord, and looked at me with a smile.

“Now, there’s many a man,” said she, “would have thought it no more than manners to bestow a word of thanks upon me for my music before walking away in such a hurry. And there’s many a woman,” quoth she most demurely, “would have the grace to express some sense of the good office I’ve done her. Haven’t I sat here playing for better than a quarter of an hour, though neither of you marked a note? What! not a word even now? Such thanklessness I never saw the like of!” And so turned round in her seat (for, indeed, I was in no mood for jesting, and had never a word to answer), and struck into another measure.

My eyes were fastened on the door by which the lord Viscount had quitted the room. Sure, I was sunk in musing, and yet they saw a thing which for another moment my mind took no note of. This was that the door—the very door mine eyes were fixed on—was first most noiselessly pushed open, and then as stealthily shut. For one moment, as I said, this conveyed no meaning to my mind; the next, I promise you, it brought both meaning and fear. I sprang up from my seat by the fire, and opened the door as quick as ever I might; indeed, I think not many seconds passed ere I was in the passage, looking both to right and left for the intruder. It was perfectly well lighted both ways, but for all that there was no sign of any creature in it. Then I went forward to the staircase, and looked there for my spy, but never a soul could I discern. I leant upon the balustrade,

scanning the polished oak steps, as though I thought to see footprints thereon that would enlighten me; and there came upon me the strangest feeling of approaching disaster—a certain expectation of mischance. One that is condemned to die may have the like, as every hour that passes brings him nearer to his inevitable doom. I went along the passage from end to end, opening every door and looking into every room, without finding, as they say, *either beast or body*. Then, much discomposed, I went back into my withdrawing-room. Rosa sat where I had left her, her fingers idle upon the keys; the fire burnt bright and cheerily; the room was eloquent of home and peace, and yet it struck me with a sense of incongruity—there was no room in my mind for its comfortable brightness. Naked weapons, angry faces, the scaffold, the block, and things yet worse than these, filled it to overflowing. I would fain have been up and doing, had I known the things whereto I should set my hand.

The smile died from Rosa's face as she looked at mine.

"Why, Mary, what's the matter?" said she. "You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"There's either a ghost or a spy in the house, I believe," said I, trying to make as though I jested; "and I scarce know which is the worse."

"Let it be a ghost, then," said she, laughing. "They're harmless creatures compared to the other sort. I'd rather have ten ghosts than one traitor to deal with."

"We're not permitted the choice," said I, "or else I think I'd differ from you. Spies you may circumvent, but ghosts you can't."

"Spies tell tales," said she, "and ghosts do nothing worse than frighten you."

"They do that same most effectually," said I, putting my hand to my heart, where was so obstinate a sinking as was hard to combat.

"Why, but truly," said she, "you do look strange." She left her seat and came to me, putting her arm about me. "You did not really see aught to frighten you, Mary, did you?" she continued, smiling, "either human or—otherwise?"

"I scarce can tell myself, dear heart," I answered, feeling myself a fool, yet knowing myself to have reason in my folly.

It had eased my mind mightily to tell her everything—both what my lord Viscount had said and the other mystery—and yet

I thought it better to forbear, for I knew myself the stronger woman of the two ; yet here was I all but bereft of my wits by what had passed. Why, I thought, should I make her partaker of my terrible fear ? So I tried to smile in answer to her smiling instead.

"Play to me, dear," said I, willing to gain some minutes for meditation—"play to me, like David to Saul, and lay the evil spirit. A ghost should be easier laid than a devil, one should think, especially if 'tis an imaginary ghost."

"And shall I be as good at the laying as David, do you think ?" said she, a little more satisfied about me. And so began to let her fingers wander over the keys, where presently she struck into a dainty measure that fitted little with my mood.

Truly, I scarce marked it. I sat down in my place by the fire, and tried to bring before my mind a clear picture of what was like to happen presently in the dining-room, and what I was to do to get my husband safe away before the morning. My lord Viscount's words, as I recalled them, laid the ghost far more effectually than Rosa's music. I could all but hear him speaking them : "I will order him to his room under arrest. It will be your business to get him away."

I put my head between my two hands, so to press help out of my brain, as it were. Away—where to ? I asked myself. A hiding-place is nothing difficult to find in our part of the country ; but a safe hiding-place, and one whence he could communicate with his friends, was another matter. And my lord had said we were to look for no further favour at his hands should Captain Hamilton fall into them again.

Away—I thought again, having no light on that point—but how ? How to get him forth of the house, to begin with ? My lord was to order him into his bed-chamber ; now, that is on the second floor, and none so easy to steal away from. And even were that contrived, could I count upon his own consent ? I asked myself. My husband hath a spirit so high that if he thought himself wrongfully accused, 'twas a great chance but he might refuse to go away at all, and insist upon staying to stand his trial by court-martial. For of course my lord could give him no hint of his orders to send him to Dublin for his trial ; nay, I fell to wondering whether I might myself without a breach of confidence towards my lord, for he had confided his honour into my keeping, and should a word of that leak abroad, where were it ? That were

a poor return for his friendship. But yet it was a weapon he had himself put into my hands, and even while I meditated how to use it most considerately, I thanked him from my heart for trusting me with one so effectual.

As I sat wringing my mind for an expedient, and finding none that seemed sufficient, there rose upon a sudden, from the vestibule below, a noise of voices loud in anger. "Presumptuous" and "insubordinate" we could clearly hear in the voice of Lord Mountjoy. Rosa got up from the instrument, and I from my seat, and so rapt had I been in my musing that I protest my alarm was as real as her own, and no acting, and this in spite of the warning my lord had given me. We ran together to the staircase, whence we could see and hear all that was a-doing in the hall; but before we came there my wits had come in place again, and I knew that this was no more than I had to expect. For Rosa, she was so pale that I had given much to be able to tell her that which had been told to me. As this was wholly out of the question, I was even compelled to continue cruel. We leant together over the balustrade, looking and listening. The first man I saw was Cargill, with a face so fixed in dismay that 'twas like a mask, and with a silver serving-trencher half dropping from his hand, standing in the corner by the entrance-door. Leaning over, I could see all the rest—my husband standing very pale and proud, and Lundy beside him with his drawn sword in his hand. My Lord Mountjoy stood in the doorway of the dining-room, where his face was in the shadow, but his attitude was even more full of pride than Captain Hamilton's, I thought. He was the first to catch sight of Rosa and me at the top of the stair, and stopped in the midst of what he was saying. There was a moment's pause, and then my husband spoke.

"My lord Viscount," said he, "I would pray you to consider whether it can ever be the duty of a man to act against his conscience."

"Sir," answered Lord Mountjoy, "a soldier that hath accepted a commission hath no business to scrutinise his orders or indulge himself in scruples. He is a man under command, and hath no responsibility of decision, but only of obedience. His duty, if he cannot conscientiously carry out the orders he receives from his superiors——"

"Is to resign his commission, my lord, as it seems to me," said Captain Hamilton, very calm, "which I would beg you of

your goodness to recall to mind that I endeavoured to do before your lordship's departure for Dublin a fortnight ago. Whether it be fair to hold me responsible for my disobedience to orders that I foresaw, and that I tried to throw up my commission for fear of——"

"Why, sir," said my lord, "what could it matter to you whether your company had Irish Catholics in it or not, or whether it consisted entirely of Irish Catholics, for the matter of that, when by your own showing you were but waiting my return to leave the army altogether."

"I can scarce imagine you put that question in earnest, my Lord Mountjoy," answered my husband. "It's not a thing to promote the welfare of the country to have the army filled with Irish Catholics, as you well know, and, sure, the welfare of the country matters to every man that hath a stake in it."

"It's not the business of any officer to criticise his orders, as I told you before," said my lord. "Gad! if every man in the army were to make himself the judge of everything he's told to do, things were at a pretty pass indeed!"

"Your lordship's conduct is an unimpeachable example of your opinion," said Mr. Hamilton, beginning to lose his temper, "for you can scarce think this fair treatment of an ancient comrade and friend."

"Man alive! can't you be silent?" said Lundy at his elbow.

"No, I can't, Lundy, and I won't, either, for 'tis shameful!" said Mr. Hamilton, turning upon him. "Look at his face there, and say which of us is the one that's ashamed of his conduct." My lord had taken a step forward, so that now he stood in the light beside the rest, and, in truth, he looked ill at his ease. "By heaven!" said Captain Hamilton, "he looks a traitor, and as for you, Lundy"—turning upon him almost with violence—"you look a fiend."

"Captain Hamilton," said my lord, putting visibly a force upon himself to be calm—indeed. I believe the last taunt had told home, and in his own despite his voice shook—"Captain Hamilton, this violence will avail you nothing. I have but acted in accordance with my views of the duty of a soldier; and, indeed"—at this the words seemed to escape from a leash, as one might figure it—"indeed, it does come hard on a man to treat an old friend and comrade with so much severity; but I have no choice that I can see. Colonel Lundy, may I beg you will con-

duet Captain Hamilton to his bed-chamber, where he will remain under arrest till to-morrow morning ? ”

He was turning away, when I heard Lundy mutter something about “ parole,” a most spiteful suggestion from one that was so well aware of Mr. Hamilton’s temper. Well he knew that his word once given had been an effectual fetter to him, and one he had never tried to rid himself of. His lordship knew it also, for which I was most thankful, though my heart gave one throb that all but choked me.

“ Sir,” said he, turning on Mr. Lundy with a face that might well have struck him silent, “ I’m not in the habit of accepting suggestions from my subordinates.”

“ It might be better if you did, for all that,” said Lundy, quite unabashed. “ Come away, Hamilton ; I’ll have to rope ye.”

“ A guard at the door and at the window will be sufficient,” said my lord, “ and that no one enters the room.”

“ My lord,” I exclaimed where I stood, “ may not I go to my husband ? ”

He looked up, and caught my eye.

“ You may, madam ; but no one else.”

His glance had a meaning in it that I tried to fathom, but in vain. Perhaps it was some hint he wished to give me of the mode wherein I might contrive Captain Hamilton’s escape. But even while I had been listening to them, a plan had sprung up full-grown, as one might say, in my head. It was as if a chart lay plain before mine eyes, with my course laid down thereon ; and not my course alone, but every rock and shoal whereon my ship was like to strike or stick.

Here was the plan. Attached to my room there is a closet that is my wardrobe ; it hath a door that is commonly kept locked, which opens into the servants’ quarters. Nothing could be easier than that Captain Hamilton should leave the room by this door ; but then, of course, began the danger of detection. Four of the escort of six soldiers that had accompanied my lord would be in that part of the house : ’twas very possible that one of these might recognise him. But even while I thought of that risk, I thought of half a dozen expedients to lessen it. The sentinel that was to be placed below the window in the court was a more serious obstacle. Yet there was a way of passing him that seemed mighty simple, as I considered it. Would Fortune but stand my

friend, it appeared to me that Captain Hamilton's escape was as good as made.

The great danger was lest his promise, refused by my lord (with how much of friendship!) should be pledged to Lundy before I could prevent it. And in truth, as he came upstairs in Lundy's custody, it seemed as though this were about to be done in my very hearing.

"You are a friend, Lundy, after all," said he, "and I beg your pardon for the words I made use of to you a minute ago. I thank you for the proposal you made to my lord, though it had no success."

Could anything seem more likely than that Lundy should here-upon renew the offer? But he forbore. Perhaps he feared that Lord Mountjoy should hear it, for the door of the dining-room stood wide open.

As if everything conspired to forward my design, the two gentlemen, setting foot upon the landing where we stood, discovered Rosa to be on the very point of fainting. I had never marked her, being so rapt in my planning. But here was the very diversion I desired; and in the confusion of calling to Cargill and to Margery, I succeeded in whispering to Captain Hamilton that he should on no account pledge his *parole d'honneur* to attempt no escape; for I had a plan that seemed feasible enough, to get him away.

Then, pretending more care for Rosa than I fear I felt, for truly it was no time for me to abandon myself to pity for another woman's weakness, when a man's life hung on mine own, I desired to have Mr. Browning informed of his sister's state. As was to be looked for, he was with us in a moment. I told him, to have the opportunity of a word apart (for his assistance was most essential to my plan), that there was cold water in plenty in my room, would he but help me to fetch it. And the moment we were within the door, I begged him to ask a pass of my lord Viscount, for himself and his servant to leave at midnight. He had no servant in the house; but he smiled, understanding me as a woman might have done.

"I fear 'tis of no use, and that he will not grant it," said he. "But I will ask it."

"Ay, do," said I.

And in another moment we were with the rest. Not one of them seemed to have marked our absence; but Rosa had some-

what recovered, and was fit to be supported back into the withdrawing-room. It was Captain Hamilton's arm she clung to. To be sure, he was in a sort her brother, and she thought his danger greater than it was. Colonel Lundy kept as close to him as his shadow, and at that I could have smiled, for my warning was given. It was Cargill I wished to speak to at that moment, and that was so easy that it needed no contriving. I desired he would have two horses in readiness for Captain Browning, who would leave Cloncall at midnight *with his servant*. At that Cargill opened his eyes. Then I ordered further that he would bring a suit of his own clothes at once into Captain Hamilton's bed-chamber; and at that he smiled, *smoking*, as they say, my whole plot. But it mattered nothing, for he is as true as steel. Then I went into the room after the rest, to find Colonel Lundy in the act of ordering my husband into his bedroom. He had, he declared, allowed him already more grace than he might be able easily to answer for to my lord. It was to no purpose that Captain Hamilton begged for only a few minutes longer, that he might first see Rosa perfectly restored to herself; Lundy was inexorable. Not another moment would he grant; Captain Hamilton must go at once into his prison. Hereupon Rosa professed herself too weary and too sick at heart to ride back to Derry that night. It was much my will that she should remain at Cloncall, and I would have gone with her to see her comfortably bestowed in her chamber; but Lundy had a word to say to that.

"Mrs. Hamilton," said he, "if you wish to remain with your husband, as my lord hath given you leave, you must even leave Mrs. Murray to the care of your waiting-woman, and come with us. When once I have shut the door on Hamilton, I shall not suffer it to be opened again to-night, I promise you."

In vain I pleaded, promising to come alone to the door of the room; he was harder to move than any rock. So I even did as he ordered, finding my ill opinion of him nowise lessened by his harshness and the manners of a bluff soldier that he had assumed. I placed Rosa in her brother's arms; I kissed her, and gave Margery charge to tend upon her in my place. Then I went into mine own room, followed by Captain Hamilton. But before I could open to him a word of what I meant to do, Colonel Lundy came in after us, and shut the door behind him,

CHAPTER VII.

HOW ONE MADE HIS ESCAPE FROM CLONCALLY, THOUGH HIS
GAOLER SAT AWAKE AND SAW HIM.

HE came in, as I said, and shut the door behind him; he gave a glance around, and then locked the door and put the key in his pocket. After that he came forward in a very leisurely manner to the fireplace, beside which the Captain and I were standing. Without saying a word, he drew in an elbow-chair and seated himself with something of ostentation, as one who should say: "Mark me; here I am, and here I mean to stay, whether you like it or no."

We looked at him for an explanation, not a little astonished at conduct so extraordinary, to which look he answered nothing, save by a smile that had something in it both of triumph and of malice. It set me thinking. It was the face of a man that had turned the tables on one that had thought to set him at a disadvantage. But why, I wondered, should Lundy's face wear such a look when he regarded Captain Hamilton? Was there some special ill-blood between them whereof I knew nothing? Was it Lundy, I wondered, that had spied upon my Lord Mountjoy and me? Had he heard my lord declare his design to spare my husband? And if he had, was he concerned to baulk the one of his wish and the other of his poor chance for life and freedom? I shrank at the time from imputing so much baseness to any man that might claim the title of a gentleman, even one in whom I had so little trust, and for whom I had so little liking. But for all my desire to avoid the kindred baseness of undue suspiciousness, the thought sprang up in my mind again and again that night, nor could I rid myself of it afterwards, when I came to think the matter over as a thing that is past and done with.

In the meantime Lundy had brought out his pistols, and was

making a great show of looking to their priming, and renewing the same. We stood and looked at him the while, waiting to be enlightened upon the subject of what he meant to do. But not a word passed till Lundy had finished the reloading of his pistols. Then at last he looked up and spoke to us, with that evil smile again upon his face.

"Sir," said he, "and madam, you no doubt expect me to *efface myself*, as the Frenchmen say; to sit without there upon the landing and watch the door rather than yourselves. Well, 'tis asking a good deal of a man on so cold a night; but I will do it if you, Hamilton, will but pass your word to remain where you are and make no attempt to escape."

"I will pass my word to you very faithfully," said Captain Hamilton, much nettled at the man's manner, and still more, I believe, at the want of courtesy he had shown to me in seating himself in my presence without my leave—"I will pass my word to you very faithfully, sir, to embrace the very first opportunity that offers of getting myself out of this scrape."

"Mighty well, sir," said Colonel Lundy; "you will, then, have to endure my company for the night, an infliction which I protest I'm grieved to impose upon you."

He spoke with a certain surface smoothness and quiet which did not conceal in the least the fact that he was crossed and chafed inwardly.

"Why, sir, you don't mean——" said Mr. Hamilton, and stopped.

"To intrude upon you? Oh, but I do, sir," said Lundy in reply. "My lord Viscount, below there in your dining-room, may have no objection that I should be the scapegoat for his manifest design of letting you off; but I know better than to go into such a snare. No, sir; you were given into my charge, and, will you nill you, I will render you up to him to-morrow morning; and on purpose to run no risks, I mean to watch you all night. Not but what I might leave you, I believe, and run but little, for with a sentry under your window, and another at each of the house-doors—you see, I've taken the liberty to add to my lord's precautions, even without his consent—and with myself outside your room-door on the landing, I think you'd be pretty safe. But I'll risk nothing; you are subtle, both of you; perhaps you thought I marked you not whispering together at the top of the stairs. Either give me your word, or here I stay."

Here was a pretty back-turn of that *fickle jade Fortune*, as men with reason call her. After so falling in with my plans, that I thought them all but accomplished, thus to leave us in the lurch! Was it not a scurvy trick? Hope began to run out of my heart as quickly as the sand out of an hour-glass when 'tis turned about, leaving it empty for the incoming, not of despair, but of anger. And, I promise you, hope ran out and anger in the faster when presently Lundy very coolly rose up from the chair he had taken, and began peeping here and prying there throughout the room. It was going beyond his commission, and so, with mighty little ceremony, I told him. Before long he came to the door of the cupboard whereon I had built so much of my plan of escape; it was locked, but he scrupled not to require the key of it.

"'Tis my private wardrobe, sir," I told him.

It was scarce worth the pain of struggling; but yet I desired to be as prudent as ever I could.

"And what of that, madam?" returned he. "I am, as it were, the warder of a prison to-night, and must make myself certain that there is no precaution overlooked nor no door of escape left open. May I pray you will give me the key at once?"

I protest I meant not to look to Mr. Hamilton for any interference; but in my embarrassment my eye wandered towards him and caught his, and the next moment he was, as one might figure it, at Lundy's throat.

"Sir," said he, "I protest I'm at a loss to understand your meaning or your manners. Is it to insult my wife you are after? Do you think she has had time to conceal a rescue-party in her wardrobe since my lord put me in your custody?"

Mr. Lundy looked at him with the same mocking smile his face had worn when he entered the room.

"You don't want to provoke a quarrel with your gaoler, do ye now, Hamilton?" said he. "Because even your assurance can scarce expect that he'll indulge you in it. Come, sir," with a sudden change of manner, "stand out of my way, will you? And you, madam, give me the key, before I'm driven to call in the assistance of force, for which"—and behold, he was back to his smooth manner again, soft as ever—"I believe you'd be more sorry yourself than I."

I gave him the key, but with a very ill grace, and the next moment our poor little door of escape—as, indeed, I had meant it to be—was discovered.

"Aha, madam!" said he, coming out of my wardrobe, "have I put my finger on your pretty little scheme? And you, sir, highy-tighty, high and mighty, 'tis not so much the insult to your good lady, I conceive, that you're so apt to resent, as the discovery of your own plans. Well, let him laugh that wins, as they say. I have found you out, in spite of your braggart loud words and your face of innocence."

Captain Hamilton knew nothing, I believe, of the other door to my cupboard, and he looked thunder-stricken at Lundy's discovery. For me, I murmured something to that effect, but so feebly that my voice was hardly audible to either of the gentlemen.

"What's that you say, madam?" said Lundy. "Hamilton knew nothing of it? A pretty story, indeed, considering that this is his own house, wherein he was born and bred up! But I pardon you for a tale that can hoodwink no one, because it shows you to be at the very end of your resources." Here he came out of the cupboard, which he had been again examining, and proceeded to shut and lock the inner door. "I will even make assurance surer," said he, "for your pains."

And with that he took out the key of that door likewise, and put that, as well as the other two, into his pocket.

"Colonel Lundy," said I, "do me one favour. Give me out of my wardrobe one mantle, I care not which; I am cold;" and so I was in truth, cold to the heart, cold in the heart and in the courage, as well as in body.

Lundy opened the door again, and gave me the very first that came to hand, that which hung on the back of it, the great old mantle that I wear still when I go abroad of a chilly morning or night. He even made as if he would have wrapped it about me, but I endured not to be touched by him, and drew back from him with so much haste that he was angered.

"As you please, madam!" said he, with a tone in his voice more harsh and snarling than he had before permitted himself to use. "As you please; it is your own fault if you will have me for an enemy instead of a friend. And now, Hamilton, you can scarce blame me if I use more rigour towards you than I was disposed to at the first. Sit down on that settle"—pointing to one.

Captain Hamilton obeyed him without a word.

"And now, sir, I give you warning that if you move from

where you sit, without leave asked of me and given, I will shoot you as I might shoot a rabbit. You saw me load my pistols ;" and with that he took one in his hand and sat down where he had been at first.

" 'Tis not for me to blame you, Lundy,' said Mr. Hamilton, " after what hath come out, though 'tis a hard way of treating an old comrade, and one that hath never harmed you. You must watch your prisoner, of course, though I think you show yourself more suspicious than there's any need for. For I protest to you that I had no recollection of that door of communication ; nor, I believe, had Mary here any more than I."

" Oh yes," said I, unable to bear this ; " I remembered it very well."

At that Lundy smiled, supposing, I believe, that I had given up the contest ; and so, indeed, for the moment I had.

" Am I, like my husband," I asked of him coldly, " to remain in one place on pain of being shot ?"

" You, madam," he returned, " may move about the room as you please, so you come not near my pistols ;" and with that he laid the one of them across his knees ; the other he placed upon the mantelpiece ready to his hand.

I could not do less than thank him for the leave he had granted me to move about, though my words were, as his conduct merited, of the coldest. Then I placed myself on the settle beside my dear husband. Colonel Lundy rose from his seat beside the fire, and began, pistol in hand, to pace up and down the room ; at first steadily and soldier-like, a sentry on duty, as one might say, but after a time his steps grew slower and slower, and he seemed like a man sunk in thought. There came a knock to the door of the room ; instead of going himself to challenge the newcomer, he made me a sign with a great show of authority to do it. But I, having no mind to betray any friend into a difficulty, sat still in my place and took no notice.

The knock was repeated, and followed quickly by a question.

" Is Mrs. Hamilton within, and can I have speech of her ?"

It was Mr. Browning's voice, and I went to the door at once, Colonel Lundy placing himself at my side, so that he might hear whatever passed as well as I. I determined that he should hear nothing, whatever Mr. Browning had come to tell me, but what was meant for his ears, and that supposing I checked something of what was meant for mine own.

"I am here, Mr. Browning," I said, "and so likewise is Captain Hamilton, and Colonel Lundy is with us; he hath adopted this Scriptural fashion of watching his prisoner for his greater security. I am sorry to have to desire you will speak loud enough to be heard through the closed door, for the Colonel hath already refused—in your hearing, I believe—to open it again to-night."

At that I stole a look at Lundy where he stood by my side, and though he caught it, and tried to look unconcerned, I perceived with some satisfaction that there was in his countenance the look of one that hath received a check.

"I came merely to explain a thing to you," said Mr. Browning outside the door. "My lord hath granted me leave to ride to Derry to-night with my servant, leaving this at any time before midnight. Now, if I may, I would be fain to wait here till the very latest of my leave to know how Rosa keeps."

"Is she worse?" I asked of him.

"No; better," said he. "But she hath not fallen asleep, so Mistress Margery tells me; and if I might be sure that no one in the house should be inconvenienced by it, I would even delay my riding until I heard that she had, or until it is as late as my pass allows."

"He'd better stay the night, hadn't he?" said Captain Hamilton where he sat. "Ask him if he will not."

I put the question as desired, caring but little whether the answer were "Yes" or "No." What did it matter, forsooth, whether he went or stayed, seeing that his "servant" was so little like to be forthcoming? But the answer, of course, was "No," that he must be in Derry before the morning.

"Can I," said he, "do any business there for either of you?"

I put the question to Captain Hamilton, who sat too far from the door to hear distinctly what was said at the outside of it; Lundy, for all his listening, never took his eyes off him. He shook his head.

"Only," said he, "if Mr. Browning, while it suits his convenience to be here, will bear my lord Viscount company, and see that he be worthily attended to his bed-chamber when he retires, he will do me a very brotherly service."

"I believe my lord is even now retiring," said Mr. Browning. "I will go and see that he lacks nothing;" and so, calling a "Good-night" to us, he went.

I turned away from the door and went back to my old place, mightily discouraged and sick at heart. Here were all things in readiness for Captain Hamilton to ride to Derry were he but ready to go, but this second readiness seemed a thing past hope of attainment. One thing a little comforted me, however, and this was that Lundy seemed but little less moody than I myself.

"Ye were meant for a conspirator, madam, I find," said he to me, permitting himself that snarling tone I had remarked before.

"You have little reason to say so, Colonel Lundy!" said I, taking his meaning plain enough, but choosing to make as though I did not.

He drew down his brows at me, as though I were a child to be frowned into reverence. At that, seeing that he thought himself worsted, though in so slight a matter, my spirits began to rise again, and at the rise of my spirits my brain began again to ponder the plan of the escape. Was all so hopelessly lost as I had been thinking? I asked myself. I fell to turning the ways and means back and forth in my mind, and presently a thing occurred to me that had hope in it. In another moment it seemed to have so much, it stood out so complete and, as I thought, so feasible, that it sent the blood burning into my face like sudden pain. I dared not look at Lundy lest he should see my thought written in mine eyes. But I sat still in my place pondering it for half an hour perhaps or better, till I saw the thing as plain in my head as I had the former plan that had miscarried. And after that I continued to sit still, perhaps as long again, desiring not to move in the matter too soon, which were destruction. By that time the house was quiet to absolute silence, and it was likely that all were asleep save only those whose business it was to watch.

The fire, too, had burnt low, which was my signal, as well as my pretext; but I dared not to go near it without leave, because of the pistol on the mantelpiece, which Lundy had forbidden me to approach. So I sat up, like one rousing herself out of a doze; in truth, we had all been silent enough to have passed for sleepers. I pressed my husband's hand, to assure myself that he was not, and at the answering pressure I held it for one moment to my heart. This was to give him notice that I was about to attempt something, so to ensure his attention, and his aid when I should need it. Certes, 'twas a warning he could not choose but heed, for its beating was so strong that there was no other strength left

in my body, neither to breathe, nor to hear, nor to see. My throat was as dry as a sanded page; my ears were full of the sound of rushing wind; there was a kind of blackness between my eyes and whatever they tried to look at. But it was very needful to hear and to see and to speak, even to speak calmly and in my ordinary voice, so I grasped at my will as one grasps the bridle of a runaway horse; I forced my heart down out of my throat by main striving. For one mighty moment I lifted up a voiceless prayer to heaven; then I sat up and spoke to Lundy. And, to mine own wonder, I spoke plain and quiet; my voice sounded in my own ears even unconcerned.

"Sir," said I, "who's to mend the fire?"

"Well, I can scarce do it," said he, stretching himself. "But you may, if you desire it."

I rose, and went forward slowly to the fireplace; I stooped over it, bringing the brands into place that were scattered; and as I stooped, I contrived to let my great cloak slip from my shoulders, as if by accident. It lay beside me as I lifted the fresh billets that lay ready on the hearth, and piled them on the old, making a great show of deliberateness, so to gain time. For my hands were cold to numbness, and my knees seemed too weak to support me, even while I knelt.

Then I rose slowly to my feet, and it was upon a sudden as though a flame of fire flashed through me from head to foot, turning me to steel. I stooped slowly for my mantle, and shook it out, as though to wrap it round me, but instead of that, I wrapped it, quick as lightning, round the head and arms of Lundy, seated in the chair at my side. I wrapped it round him in fold after fold, before ever he had time to struggle; having so much of vantage, 'tis even possible I might have mastered him by myself, but I had no need, for Captain Hamilton was by my side in an instant. He took the pistol from Lundy's knee; had he taken thought to fire that, it had gone ill enough with my husband and with me. But by Heaven's favour vouchsafed to us, in the sudden bewilderment of my attack, he put his hands up to draw away the cloak from his face, not down to grasp and fire the pistol that lay on his knees.

"Quick, Mary!" said Captain Hamilton, drawing the cloak still closer round Lundy's face; "make haste; fetch me a rope or something, to tie him. We mustn't murder the man."

There was no rope at hand, but I bethought me of an excellent

substitute ; I whipped a sheet off the bed, and tore it into wide strips that would bind him every whit as safely. I had certainly grudged it bitterly, at any other time, to destroy the good Hollands linen in such prodigal fashion. But a woman's pride in her plenishing is but as the small dust in the balance, when her husband's life and liberty are the weights in the other scale.

Captain Hamilton took one of the bands of linen, and passed it quickly two or three times round Lundy's body and the back of the chair, tying it firmly behind, I taking my turn to hold the mantle firmly in its place. This done, he unwrapped a fold or two thereof, and drew down Lundy's arms ; these in like manner he secured to the back of the chair and to his body, tying them securely just above the elbows.

"Now," said he, "Mary, take you one of the pistols ; be ready to hold it to his head the moment I uncover his face ; if he attempt to call out, shoot him as he'd have shot me."

"I will," said I, taking the pistol.

I thought we had made good speed in securing him ; but for all our haste, by the time we unwrapped the cloak from his face, his breath was so far gone that there was little fear of his crying out. His wit was not gone, however, though his breath was spent, and so I placed the muzzle of the pistol against his temple.

"We will do you no harm, Mr. Lundy, if you will be still," said I, "and we will let you get your breath before we gag you ; but if you attempt to give any alarm, I will shoot you dead on the instant."

After that warning, he sat still enough, if, indeed, he could have gathered breath for a proper halloo, by the time Mr. Hamilton gagged him, which I hardly think. The only thing that then remained to do, for safety, was to fasten his legs to the chair as we had his arms ; that done, it was almost laughable to see the man as helpless as a wooden image, that had been our master a short ten minutes before. Laughing at him was the last thing in my thoughts, for all that. The moment I thought my husband's peril past, I fell to trembling again, like any fool, as if there were nothing more to do to get him away. But oh the thankful heart ! If ever a woman were wrapped in thanksgiving to Heaven, that woman was I, and the time was then.

There was no difficulty after he was set so helpless in his chair in getting the keys, which he had put into the pocket of his coat ;

I judged, from what he had said when he came into the room, that there was no sentry at the door of the room, therefore I chose the key of that one. Fearing lest the smallest oversight might put in peril that which had been gained, I oiled it before I put it in the lock ; it turned without a sound, and I peeped out. The landing was empty—Captain Hamilton was free.

He turned upon the door-sill, however.

"Upon my word, Mary," said he, "I scarce can think to leave him in such a state ; he would have taken my word, you know. If you will pledge me yours, Lundy, to give no alarm till morning——"

Again that evil light sparkled in Colonel Lundy's eyes. I knew that he would promise, and I knew that he would break his word without a scruple. So without a scruple I put in mine own.

"Nay," said I, "but if he be found tied up like this and gagged, 'tis sure and certain that no blame will light on him for your escape ; 'tis an impossibility on the face of it for him to stay you or to alarm the house. But if you loose him, who will be his witness that he was not your accomplice ? My word would go for little in such a matter, I cannot but think. Better leave him as he is, dear James ; it's not a very comfortable night he will pass, indeed, but he runs no danger to life or limb, and it may save his reputation from a possible stain."

Had I doubted the wisdom of the counsel I was giving, the fierce look of disappointment in the man's eyes would have confirmed me. To be sure, he was suffering some discomfort, and before long would even be suffering pain ; but there was more in it than that. The man was not fit to be trusted : of that I was as sure as if I had seen him perform a treachery. Captain Hamilton had never shared my ill opinion of him ; his anger against him for his conduct that evening was all melted away now that he was at his mercy, and it went sorely against the grain with him to leave him tied up as he was. He was for turning back again to loose him after he was actually on the stairs, but, unwilling to cross my earnest wish, he let himself be overruled, desiring only that as soon as I should judge it to be safe, and he be beyond pursuit, I would at least unfasten the gag.

There was now but one danger to run from the other side—to wit, the passing of the sentries at the doors, who were so well acquainted with Captain Hamilton's appearance ; but from our own they appeared to multiply around us. Carrill's transports

might almost have published his master's escape to the whole house. I went near to wishing he were gagged as fast as the enemy upstairs. Captain Hamilton's own repugnance to leave me was like to be another danger; he seemed scarce able, for all that had passed, to bring his mind to it.

"You've saved me, Mary," he said, again and again, "but I doubt 'tis at some peril to yourself. How can I leave you to face it alone?"

"Don't think of it," I told him. "I run no risk at all, I believe. Lord Mountjoy is none of your furious men, like Jeffries, to revenge himself on a wife for taking the part of her husband."

"Ah, but if he should?" said Captain Hamilton. "How shall I hear how he takes it? How shall I learn how it goes with you, Mary, when he knows of my escape and the part you've taken in it?"

"I can't help agreeing with Mrs. Hamilton," said Mr. Browning; "my lord is not the kind of man to be a hard judge to her, or to any woman, acting in such a case. But we must get to horse," said he; "my leave expires, you know, at twelve o'clock. It would be a poor return for what your wife hath done to lose the fruit of it out of mere delay. Come, Hamilton; make haste and disguise yourself."

"Disguise myself, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Hamilton. "To what end? I shall do nothing of the sort, you may rest assured. Once past the sentry, I'm as safe here as if I were in Holland."

"No doubt," said he, "but it's needful to pass him unknown, you see, for were he to give the alarm, who knows whether you might get clear away? And were he to fail in his duty, you'd do no more than to put him in your own shoes, which were an ill return for any favour he might show you."

"Very well said, Mr. Browning," said I. "Come, James—holding out Cargill's coat that he had laid ready—"you won't be too high-minded to wear this, since 'tis to ease my mind."

"Ah, Mary," said he, "even have your own way with me; you have done what you liked with me since ever I knew you, and, faith! it's not to-night I'm going to rebel."

Cargill, armed with Lord Mountjoy's permit to Mr. Browning, went out to the stable to get the horses. We stayed together where we were, and Captain Hamilton began to give me some directions. I asked him whither he meant to ride.

"Indeed," said he, "I think I'd better keep that to myself,

hadn't I? You'll be safer wanting the knowledge of my address to-morrow morning." And then he fell again to deploring the need that I should face the morrow morning without his presence.

At that Mr. Browning put in his word.

"My lord granted me my pass on the pretext of business," said he, "and appearances, I suppose, must be kept up. But what's to hinder me from riding back as soon as I've seen you in safety? Give me the charge of Mrs. Hamilton's welfare to-morrow——"

"You are a good friend, Browning," said my husband; "I'll never forget this."

"And I doubt not," said Mr. Browning, taking Captain Hamilton's hand, which he held out to him—"I nothing doubt but we can get word to you when once we know your hiding-place."

"I'll leave word of that in my quarters in Derry," said Captain Hamilton, rather grimly.

Whereat I smiled, thinking it no more than a jest.

And now we could hear the horses' feet at the door; we could hear the sentry's voice as he challenged Cargill. It was time for us to tear ourselves apart—a thing that seemed a sheer impossibility. He had the worst of that, but I did not dare say more than I had done already to lighten his burden. I was well enough assured that my lord would permit no harm to come to me for what I had done, but I could not say so. He left a tear upon my face as he kissed me for good-bye; it shamed me, for my eyes were dry. And yet I knew not whither he went, nor what dangers he might have to face before I saw him again.

Mr. Browning went forward to open the door, but my husband bade him wait another moment.

"Mary," said he, "now that I bethink me of it, there are some of my men in the regiment too good to be lost sight of; if they be discharged, see if you can find something for them to do about the place; they may be better than gold to us yet. See, if any man come to you with this token, 'From Derry to the Rose,' know that he comes to you from me. Greet him with this counter-sign, 'Stands the town in the old place still?' and if he reply, 'Nay, the half of it is across the lough at the Waterside,' then find that man a place, either here or with a known friend; and this as you value a true man, and one that is faithful to me."

"I will," said I.

And then Mr. Browning began again to open the door.

Again my husband stopped him. He had no sense of any danger to himself in such delays; it was the thought of that in which he supposed me to stand that filled his mind.

"How can I leave you so?" said he—"how can I? I would I left you in Wamphray's charge; I would there were some man with you to stand beside you to-morrow morning."

"Have not I promised to do what I can?" said Mr. Browning.

"You have, and I thank you," said my husband—"I thank you, and I beg your pardon for appearing to slight you; but you're not her brother, Browning; she hath no claim on you."

"She is sister to my sister," said he, "and that is a claim I shall be proud and happy to meet with a brother's service, so you will honour me by allowing it."

"You make me everlastingly your debtor," said Captain Hamilton, taking my hand and putting it into Mr. Browning's, who touched it with his lips.

"And now," said he, "we must get to horse in earnest; we are here too long. Madam," said he to me, "granting that men and captains may respect your sex and treat you with forbearance, 'tis more than we have any right to expect from the night airs. Pray stand away from the door before I open it to ride away with my servant. You see, Master Servant," said he to Captain Hamilton, "if I be not ready to discharge the trust you have reposed in me, even in so trifling a matter as the risk of a chill."

It was kindly done of him to attempt to rattle, and perhaps it got my husband away from me with less of pain than anything else could have done; but after all our whispering and speaking low, I went near to crying out aloud as the door closed behind them, and though mine eyes had never a tear in them—shame on them for their dryness!—it was an old, old broken woman I felt as I climbed the stairs. It seemed a long, long journey from the hall to the door of mine own room, where I had Captain Hamilton's errand to do. This time I found Colonel Lundy exceeding ready to signify his promise to be silent till the morning; when once the gag was off him, he was willing to add his oath to his word if I required it. But I judged him safe enough when I had shut the door upon him, leaving him bound still in his chair, and then I went to Rosa's room, and told her all that had been done since we had left her; after that, for all that was yet uncertain, I was presently as sound asleep as any infant in its cot.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THERE CAME A MESSAGE OUT OF DERRY TO MRS. HAMILTON.

'TIS a strange thing, and hath the look of a premeditation of fate to discredit our forecasting, how rarely the thing we confidently expect comes to pass. That which we have hoped for is set beyond our reach, and that which we have dreaded passes us by. And even if the thing itself do come about, the circumstances that attend it are all other than we looked for ; so that 'tis of no use in the world to look forward and plot and contrive and plan out our behaviour. Far wiser were it, could one so rule one's own spirit, to meet good and evil alike with unconcern, trusting to be found sufficient to any need, either of thankfulness or of fortitude.

Here was my husband, gone from me in anxious apprehension of danger and trouble to me that I knew to be unfounded, though it was denied me to make him sharer of my knowledge. Yet, though I saw that his carefulness for the same was trouble merely wasted, I could not take the lesson to myself, nor evit to fall into a like prodigality. My lord, I knew, would stand between me and scath ; but yet, for his own name, I could not see how he should avoid some show of severity. For Lundy, I looked for nothing better at his hands than a malicious endeavour to revenge his disappointment on me that had brought it about. I have no liking to be rated, and had none, certainly, either to the situation or to the outlook. In the early morning, when the house was full of the noise of the discovery of Mr. Hamilton's escape, running and scuffling, and calling indoors and out, and blaming of the sentries in the courtyard under my windows (poor fellows ! what could they tell, save that the Captain had rid away for Derry with his servant

towards twelve of the clock, according to his pass?), I would have given much to be anywhere else in the world than in Clonally. *Any Bush had been my Bield*, as the saying is. I fell to listening for the sounds of Mr. Browning's return, as though it were my salvation to have the support of his presence. And then there came into my mind a new fear, and one so terrible that I fell next to desiring his absence yet more fervently—all but praying, in sooth, for something that might delay his coming till after the departure of my lord and the Colonel.

This was the fear: That one or both of these gentlemen might suspect who the servant might have been, and question Mr. Browning. I judged him a man of too open a temper to have much talent in evading questions. Were he once convicted of abetting Mr. Hamilton's escape, was it not even too likely that he might be thrust forthwith into his danger? And that were as much as to put the fetters on Mr. Hamilton's wrists, for nothing could be more certain than that he would return at his best speed, either to free his friend or share his punishment. If it is true that love drives out fear, 'tis no less true that a great fear drives away a small one, so that I protest I never carried a lighter heart to a merry-making than that wherewith I heard myself summoned, still in the gray of the morning, to attend my lord Viscount's inquiry as soon as I possibly could. Certes, I made no long tarrying, but was below, with none but Margery to attend me or keep me in countenance, in a far shorter space of time than they looked for.

Here I found, now that things were come to a point, that the trouble met half-way was but trouble thrown away. I was not rated in the least; in truth, there was not a word said to me that need have caused me disquiet had I foreseen it.

My lord was bound to question me; but he did it wondrous civilly. I took refuge in my right of silence, and desired to know if there was any law that could compel a woman to give information that might lead to her husband's harming.

He desired upon this that I would not be contumacious; but to that I had a ready answer.

"My lord," said I, "I make no denial that I got Mr. Hamilton away; and Colonel Lundy here can very well tell you the manner of it." At which methought his lordship's face a little twitched, as though he had heard of it already. "As to saying anything more, or anything," I continued, "that can lead to my husband's

capture—— My lord, I shall have no objection to reply to any question you would expect my Lady Mountjoy to answer, supposing you to stand in Captain Hamilton's case, and she in mine."

This, I thought, a little staggered my lord.

"But, madam," said he, "I can't let you ride off in such a fashion as this. Any question," said he, "that it might be the duty of my wife to answer, I expect you will answer the like."

"Even so be it," said I; "I am content. And you yourself shall be the judge (as indeed you are) whether it can be the duty of any woman to say a word that can put her husband in jeopardy, either of liberty or of life."

On this matter, knowing something of his mind, I made bold to speak out, and so he told me.

"You are bold, Mrs. Hamilton," said he, "though I cannot but pardon your boldness, for there is some truth in what you say."

At this, seeing my advantage (and knowing that in his mind I stood already clear of blame), I even took it, and pushed the matter home.

"You shall likewise be the judge, my lord," said I, "whether in what I did I went beyond the duty of a wife. You, too, Mr. Lundy," said I, turning to him, "shall tell me what you think, considering all the circumstances."

It was a question that perhaps was overbold; and it was my fear of Lundy, more than any other thing, that drove me to put it. I was moved to know how I stood with him, were it the worst; for 'tis a thing I cannot abide, a half-seen danger. To my surprise, he came very frankly off, with a great laugh, like one that looked upon what was past but as a game wherein we had bested him.

"Indeed, madam," said he, "I think there's none of us can blame you, unless, as you say, we are prepared to bid our own wives stand submissive in our time of need—I least of all, though I must say your usage of me was none of the gentlest. But what a man with loaded pistols ready to his hand gets from a gentlewoman with no better weapon than a great mantle, I say he should take without grudging. So if my lord be of my mind, I would even give my voice for letting you go free."

This speech of Lundy's was no small marvel to me, especially when presently I found myself at liberty to retire. An explanation occurred to me later, whether 'tis the true one or no perhaps it is scarce for me to say, so prejudiced as I ever was against him.

But it was simply this : That if, indeed, he had found means to spy upon us, either himself or by means of some one in his pay, and had overheard some or all of our dialogue of the evening before, he was aware that my lord could not intend any punishment to me. He considered, no doubt, that to show rancour against me were useless ; and that to take the thing as he had might perhaps lull our suspicions of him to rest, and so give him further opportunities to contrive my lord's downfall, on purpose to rise on his ruin.

The next thing was a searching of the house from garrets to cellars, I think at Lundy's instance ; who seemed convinced that the fugitive was concealed within the walls thereof ; though, indeed, we have no secret hiding-place at Cloncall, such as have been often found so useful in times of danger in houses where they exist. While they were a-searching, first one and then another of the soldiers that had smelt out something of the truth, came to me privately and begged leave to wish me luck for a brave and fortunate lady. I say not but I was pleased at the flattery, though still more to know my husband so beloved in the ranks. They presently convinced themselves that, wherever Captain Hamilton was concealed, 'twas out of their power to lay hands on him, and so rid away to Derry ; where, no doubt, they had some of the news that I received a very few minutes after their departure. I cannot imagine to this day how they contrived to miss Mr. Browning that brought it ; but so by great happiness they did. And ere the sound of their horses' feet had properly died away he was with us, mightily chafed at that whereof I was so thankful—that he had been absent from my side at the time of the inquiry. 'Twas nothing less than a providence of God, I told him, and Rosa, that had kept out of sight all the morning, backed me up in it. And then immediately we desired his news, which he was nothing loath to let us have.

This said news was so good, and so like my husband's daring, that more than once (notwithstanding the heavy reason I had for sadness) I could not choose but laugh aloud. For do but think of this man, supposed to be flying for his life—what must he do, forsooth, but to ride straight to Derry, and therein to his quarters ; where he first set to work to look over his papers, some of which he burnt ; and some that he judged it well to preserve he tied into a parcel and gave to Mr. Browning to be delivered into my hands. After that, what does he next but to get up his orderly

servant, one of the trusty men of whom he had told me, and send him for the others, of whom he had said they were too good to be lost sight of ; to them he gave tokens and countersigns, the same as he had given to me, telling them, in case they should be discharged, to present themselves at Cloncall, where employment should be found for them. Next he sends for Gustavus Hamilton, the Major, and one or two more of his brother officers that were in quarters, and gives them an account of the whole quarrel between my Lord Mountjoy and himself from the time he had virtually resigned his commission to my lord, before he rid away to Dublin, begging them of their friendship to have a care of his reputation while 'twas impossible for him to defend it himself. To which end, if they saw fit to draw up a paper stating the case, he said he would be always to be heard of either at Comber or at Moira, where, if they sent it to the charge of my Lord Massareene or Sir Arthur, he would set his hand to it and send it back.

Heard one ever before of a runaway that left his address behind him ? or of one that in the very moment of escape thought less of safety to his life than of safety to his honour ? Having put his affairs into the order he desired, he rid, as Mr. Browning told us, near the dawning of day, as calmly and quietly out of Derry as though he were an envoy sent upon an honourable errand, rather than a fugitive fleeing from a halter. I myself might call his conduct rashness and foolhardiness ; but if Rosa or her brother had named it anything less than gallantry, sure they had found me less than friendly to reckon with.

Gallantry it was, in very truth, and of the very sort that is most precious on the battle-field—in the assault or in the defence of any fortress—in any and every forlorn hope ; and that he took no heed of it, more than the most ordinary matter of routine, did that make it less a credit to himself and a glory to his friends ? How should a man be aware that he draws his breath ? And this integrity of calmness in the front of danger was as natural to Captain Hamilton as breathing. As, bit by bit, all he had done after leaving Cloncall was described to me, 'twas the very man himself that stood before my thoughts ; at every added feature I was made to laugh, and laugh again, till the tears stood in mine eyes, and for all 'twas the laughter brought them, I could not tell whether 'twas pain or mirth that was the cause.

He sent me, through Captain Browning, a score or more of messages—of thanks, of love, of carefulness for my welfare ; and,

sure, I knew that no words he was master of would carry the half of his meaning. It was even as if he stood within call of me, as I heard and treasured his dear words; but the last message of all set him far away from me once more. For thus it ran:

"As he turned to ride away," said Mr. Browning, "I was at his bridle-rein, and he had yet another word to add. 'See you fail not to commend me to my wife,' said he; 'and tell her that I leave all my family at Clonccally in her care, with the utmost confidence in her prudence and foresight.'"

I even threw up my hands with a cry at that hearing.

"God be good to them, then," cried I, "if I be the best of their stay on earth!" And it was as if till that moment I had never begun to sound my loneliness. For do but think what a plight I was in—and they that were left to my charge. To manage the place I think nothing of now, nor did then; it was not that that was my burden. But to be left to guide, and, as it were, defend the household in so dangerous and troubled times—where a wrong step taken by any one of us might plunge the whole family in ruin, as witness this affair of my husband's—here was a burden for a stronger back, a task beyond my power, conscious as I was of my own weakness both of heart and arm. My discretion and foresight, forsooth! where were they? I knew myself rash where I should be cautious, and yet but timorous to face the consequences of my rashness; ay, and but very short of sight, where the gift of prophecy itself had scarce been too liberal a preparation for the difficulties we might have to face. And no wise head, no bold heart, no strong arm beside me, to fall back upon. Mine own heart and head were true and frank, at least, if not wise and bold, and gave me honest warning by their quaking and trembling of the sort of help I was like to have from them in time of need.

It was true that Mr. Browning had promised me his counsel and assistance; and that had mightily heartened me, save for one thing; to wit, that in the nature of things he could not be long at hand to give it. A sea-captain is tied to his ship, as a soldier to his regiment: when she is ready for sea, to sea he must go, whatever the need for him on shore. How could I tell but that, at the very moment when his support should be most needful to me, this one might be called away out of my reach? Yet even so, there was some small comfort in the thought of his promise.

There was Wamphray, to be sure: my brother, and likely to

be no further afield than the Liberties of Derry should I send for him. But in these days the ways of my good brother Wamphray (for all the love we bore one another) were not my ways ; nor, though I esteemed him truly, was there that sympathy between us—that understanding that needed no words—that subsisted between Rosa and her brother.

Wamphray's ways were none of mine, nor mine of his ; he was too fine-drawn and subtle to be my guide, and I too headstrong and eager (as he said, finding me blameworthy therein) to be his pupil. No ; the more I considered the matter and all my circumstances, the more certain I grew that there was no possibility of shifting the burden of care and charge from mine own shoulders to any other ; and God alone, who made my heart, knew how unfit it discerned itself for the load, and how it shrank appalled at the prospect before it.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW ANOTHER AND A LESS WELCOME MESSENGER CAME TO
CLONCALLY OUT OF DERRY.

IF ever I was taken by surprise in my life—and sure that is a thing that happens to me as oft as to my neighbours—I was so in the afternoon of that very day—the day following Captain Hamilton's escape out of Cloncally. Cargill came into the room where I sat with Rosa and her brother, and let me know that Master Jedediah Hewson, my father's minister, waited below in the vestibule, and desired to see me. Had it been a visit from my Lord Deputy Tyrconnel he came to announce, it had scarce been more unexpected or less welcome, for there is no man in the world that so despises and suspects me as Mr. Howson doth. For my part, I despise not him, but I am no friend to him; it is he, I do verily think, that hath come between me and my father and brother.

Never was a woman, I think, more parted from her home and her kinsfolk by her marriage than I. All the affairs and interests of my husband and his friends were different from my father's; in some matters they were even opposed, Captain Hamilton belonging both by birth and training to the moderate Royalist party, and my father being an old Commonwealth's man. It therefore is scarce needful to mention that my husband was an Episcopalian in his doctrine, and my father a Puritan of the old school; and what he was to *enthusiasm*, Master Hewson was to fanaticism. It hath ever been a matter of great wonder to me how my marriage to Captain Hamilton came to pass; sure, that was *made in heaven*, as they say, contrived and brought about alike by powers that could not be withstood. 'Twas no more unlikely that a Cavalier

should fix his fancy on a Roundhead maiden than that a Puritan of the Puritans should give his consent to his daughter's marriage with a Malignant; yet both miracles happened. I think in no long time my father began to be of opinion that, in giving his consent thereto, he had acted rashly and wrongly. Mr. Hewson's view appeared to me to be that, in so doing, Mr. Murray had committed the unpardonable sin; unless, indeed, the unpardonable sin was mine own, in changing to my husband's creed and Church from that wherein I had been born and brought up; which I need not say was of the strictest sect of the Pharisees. There! 'tis written. I have thought it very often, but I never dared before to put it into words; but, indeed, I had come to the conclusion, years before my marriage, that in their zeal for the pureness of doctrine and discipline my father and his friends were like the Pharisees of old, in that they turned aside from the substance of religion to embrace the shadow thereof.

To mistrust every impulse of our nature, lest it lead into a snare—to be ever on the outlook for things to be forbidden and thwarted, so as to gain the favour of God that made them pleasant—to make it the object of our chief endeavours to avoid giving Him cause for anger—is this religion? Which religion they yet tell us is no slave's yoke of bondage, but a dear tie and support. To have filled this world with things beautiful and delightful, which yet to enjoy is to transgress His law—to have created us full of impulses and appetites, which yet we satisfy at the peril of our souls—is this benevolence? Is this worthy of our reverence? Is this worthy of our hearts' adoration? And yet they teach us that this is the attitude of our God towards His creatures, adding to that that He is a God of love—nay, that He is Love—Love in essence. It is, and ever hath been, a thing wonderful to me, how men can so wrest their conscience as to believe so flat a contradiction.

How anxiously I myself strove to believe it—with what daily pain, with what strong crying and tears, I fought the battle of Reverence for Right against Reverence for Belief, striving to convince my heart, wiser than my head, that this was the right Divine goodness, and that 'twas only mine own natural depravity that rebelled at thinking it so—none knows save God, and He, I hope, hath forgiven me. For, sure, it is a sort of blasphemy to try to wrest that conscience which Himself hath made our guide (in belief as well as in conduct) against its own light.

No one, even among the Puritans, can call Captain Hamilton lax either in principle or in practice; but his view of these matters is other than this, and bears less hard upon the spirits. There may well be a truth in that wherewith my father taunted me when we had so grievous a difference concerning my going with Captain Hamilton to Church; and that, the yoke being of a sudden lightened, I stood in danger of throwing it off entirely. And yet I know not.

To follow the good is more comfortable than to flee the evil, and hath more of encouragement; but I know not that 'tis any easier. I think it is the contrary. I myself find it an easier matter to deny myself in ten sins than to attain to one virtue; but for all that, the one is the child's duty and the other the slave's task.

I never have doubted, since I had a child of my own, which way of looking at this was the more Divine. "Like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him"—'twas the Psalm for the day when Roland was christened. And then, how it goes, "For He knoweth whereof we are made; He remembereth that we are but dust." If this be true—as who can doubt it, being the words of His own Scripture?—then 'tis not so much the giving offence to Him that we should dread, as the falling short of any nearness to Him whereto we might, being helped of Him, hope to attain. "Look also," saith the Psalm, "how far the east is from the west; so far hath He set our sins from us." "How fair a prospect! How gracious a removal!" quoth my own heart to itself. "And yet how consonant to what we know!" For if, in one view of it, they be as far asunder as the poles of heaven, yet in another it is but as the turning of the face from east to west, from the doing of our own will to the following of His. A step by step progress, no doubt, as befits our dust; but yet, being turned by His mercy in the right direction, a progress wherein every faltering step leads through brightening light to the perfect day.

'Tis but the shield reversed, according to the fable; but, sure, 'tis an unimaginable gain to have passed from the side of iron to the side of gold; and I came out of Church a freed woman from barriers that had oppressed me all my life. Then, lest through mine own diffidence I should fail to grasp the liberty that was set within my reach, I did forthwith the thing I had long been pondering, and severed myself altogether from my father's com-

munion, and by the same stroke from his affection and from mine old home. He despised my opinions—what he knew of them—as wanting in strength, which to him hath always seemed to include sternness; me also he despised as an apostate from the faith of my girlhood, which, as I have been explaining, I was not.

I, on my part, was debarred from resenting an attitude of mind that I had foreseen, though it grieved me; I could even, strange as it seemed, understand it, and find somewhat in it to reverence. But I understood it best, and had most toleration for it, when my father and I were apart, and consequently was disposed to acquiesce in his manifest desire that we should not often meet. For Wamphray and Rosa, something to my wonder, no restraint was laid upon their intercourse with us, and this was an immense solace and satisfaction to me. For Mr. Hewson, he avoided me in the most pointed manner, taking pains in the family to show (as I gathered from a word let drop by Rosa now and then) that if to Mr. Murray I was despicable, to him I was absolute anathema. Wherefore I could not choose but marvel when, on the day after Captain Hamilton's escape, he came into my room, sat him down at my side, and held out to me once more, as it were, the right hand of fellowship. Me he greeted with something of distance in his manner; Rosa, if one may be permitted an expression so paradoxical, with a sort of austere warmth; to Mr. Browning his manner was dubious, as that of one who holds his judgment in suspense. He answered our questions concerning Mr. Murray's health and Wamphray's with that preciseness that is his characteristic, as though it were a matter of conscience to leave out no detail; and then fell to asking questions of his own about Captain Hamilton's escape; whereof Wamphray had had word early in the day, mixed with many new circumstances and enlargements that had no counterpart in the actual truth of what had passed; which I told him, he listening with rapt attention.

"Frail human nature," he said, when I had finished my story, helped out now and then by the others—"frail human nature would say that this was well done of you; but frail human nature is ever too much disposed to give the glory to the mortal instrument rather than where the praise is really due. I trust, Mrs. Hamilton, that you have not so far forgot your early training as to take the glory to yourself; you were but the tool in the hand of Almighty Power, to whom 'tis as easy to discomfit a thousand as half a dozen."

Now, this was the very first time that any one had expressed to me a feeling anything like mine own, respecting the occurrences of the night before. How could I, remembering my tremors, my weakness, my first plans that I thought so feasible so ignominiously frustrated; and then the second, that scarce were mine at all in any real sense, brought beyond all reasonable expectation to succeed—how could I, remembering all these things, doubt for a moment that what he said was the pure truth, and that I deserved no praise for the escape, but Almighty Providence alone? Also this was, to the best of my remembrance, the first time that Master Hewson had said anything to me—at least, since I began in any measure to think for myself—to which I could assent heartily and without reservation. So I answered him to his wish, agreeing that what he said was no more than truth, and disclaiming any credit or praise for myself for the occurrences of the night.

He looked surprised.

"'Tis but rarely, Mrs. Hamilton," said he, "if report speak truly of you, that you now show a disposition so gracious. But I am come neither to praise you nor to blame you, but am simply the bearer of a message to you from your father."

"I am ready to hear you," said I, thinking in myself that I was pretty well aware of what the message was like to be.

Whereupon he began to *expound* my father's mind to me. No word less important will convey an idea of his manner of discharging his errand. He did all but to give out a text for his homily; and even without that aid to serious exposition, he went very nigh to dividing it into heads. As, for example:

Firstly, that the country was in a troublous state; and no longer fit for safe and quiet dwelling whereon he enlarged at some length.

Secondly, that we were far from English neighbours, and were therefore in a more dangerous state than those that had such.

Thirdly, that we had no longer a man at the head of the household, but a frail, weak, foolish woman ('tis the very fact that he spared not to characterise me as such to my face), and that therefore our dangers were multiplied by ten.

Fourthly, that, there being none to come to our aid in any emergency, 'twould be our wisdom to go where emergencies were less likely to arise.

Fifthly, that such a place was Derry; and such a place, we being got to Derry, was my father's house therein.

And then followed the application : that it was my father's conclusion, arrived at after much and painful thought over my matters, that I should forthwith betake myself to this place of refuge, that very day if I could, or the next at the latest ; riding daily, if I pleased, to Cloncall, till all my goods should be bestowed in safe keeping, and the house so far dismantled as I should think fit.

"Such reasonable liberty," he continued, clearing his throat as if for his peroration, "as a married woman may think her right, worthy Master James Murray hath empowered me to promise you ; he, on his part, looking for such compliance and obedience as a father hath a right to from a daughter of any age or condition."

'Twas as tempting an offer, to my mood, as could well have been made me. To leave behind me the care I shrank from ; to provide duly for the safe keeping of my husband's property, and yet to have the burden of the charge of it taken off my back—it was what I could have wished, had wishing been having, that day. And even the condition that I should render obedience to my father, to his own interpretation of what was his due, seemed a thing not too hard to promise, a price not too dear for so many and great benefits. I looked to Mr. Browning, if, perhaps, I might discern some inkling of his mind anent the offer ; but he had turned his eyes away. And this set me meditating ; for, indeed, I was not so dull, nor so besotted with the wish to be free from my responsibility, as to have failed to see, even while Master Hewson was speaking, where the difficulty lay.

It was, of course, that Captain Hamilton had never contemplated my leaving the place, and that we knew not his mind upon it. Clearly, he thought it not too difficult a charge for me, nor too dangerous a dwelling, since he had directed me to receive men from his company, should they come to me, and to find them employment about the place. 'Twas evident that he looked I should remain upon the place to do his will.

His property—if he thought it in my charge, had I any right to shift the care of it to other shoulders ? I could send a message to him, it was true, and then and there I resolved to do it, and upon my fear lest it should fail to come safe to his hand, was all of a sudden enlightened as to what folly it were to quit the house without both sending it and hearing his reply. For put the case that it missed him, and that he should hear unprepared that Cloncall was dismantled and deserted, might he not suppose that I

had suffered for my action in his escape, and be goaded on to do some desperate thing that might damage his cause past mending?

"Master Hewson," said I, having come to my conclusion, "I were a happy woman could I think it right to accept my father's offer as freely as he makes it. But this that he hath counselled is too great a change to venture upon all at once, without careful thought and consideration; and besides that, I should think that I acted ill by Captain Hamilton to leave his house without his knowledge and permission. It would lift a load from my mind could I even give you a promise; but that also is impossible until I hear from my husband, and who can say when that may be?"

"May a man so far presume as to crave of you some reason for so whimsical a conclusion?" demanded Master Hewson, in his old tone of sarcasm.

I had all but forgot it, but at the first sound of it a hundred scenes of strife between us rose into my mind—scenes wherein I had ever and always been worsted. Even then it shook for one moment my faith in mine own judgment, and had perhaps shaken it yet more rudely, had not Mr. Browning lifted his eyes, first on Mr. Hewson and then on me. As I met them I knew that I had answered to his mind, and thereupon felt that I had answered right. I plucked up a spirit, therefore, and told him one by one the reasons I have written down above, which I even looked should convince him. Nothing of the kind; he rebuked me sternly.

"'Tis ever your habit, madam," said he, "to *think*, as you term it, *for yourself*, instead of being guided by an older and far wiser head than your own; and that head your father's, too, whose wishes you are bound to reverence, for as great as you think yourself. But she that dares to show such a temper in matters spiritual, how should we look for other manners from her in matters temporal? That you find no cause to repent your contumacy in this case is what I shall endeavour to wish for you rather than hope or expect. Come, Mrs. Murray; your good husband and the rest will be looking for us long ere we can get back to Derry. Shall we go?"

"Nay, but under your favour, sir," said Mr. Browning, "it seems to me that you are something over-severe on Mrs. Hamilton. 'Tis no longer to her father's wish, but to her husband's, that she owes her first obedience; and taking into the count all she hath

urged, as well as a word or two he let drop last night, I think she hath decided wisely——”

“Hath he made you his spokesman, sir?” asked Mr. Hewson, looking upon Captain Browning very sternly.

“I might retort the question,” said Mr. Browning, “were it civil to bandy words in a lady’s presence. But, sir, I rather choose to answer it, and you shall understand that if he have not gone so far as to give me authority to speak for him, he hath at least desired me to counsel Mrs. Hamilton when she asks it; and, sir, if she had asked me to counsel her in this business, I must tell you plainly that I would have advised her to give you the answer she hath done.”

“Well, sir,” said Mr. Hewson, “you are very bold thus to support an undutiful daughter in her rebellion; ’tis hardly, give me leave to tell you, the conduct I expected from your sister’s brother.”

Mr. Browning bowed, as one who should say: “We have been over this ground before; why need we retrace our steps?” Then he spoke:

“Give us but a little time, Master Hewson; there can be no question but the city is safer dwelling in these troubles than the country; I have scarce any doubt but that Captain Hamilton, when we can hear from him, will wish his wife to establish herself in security within its wall. But I own I think that were she to leave this house with the haste you counsel, she would show small consideration or respect to him, and that for the reasons she stated herself. Why, sir, think but of it. Were her message to miss him, or be delayed—as who could warrant it would not?—what were his feelings were he to venture here in ignorance of her departure? ’Tis we, I think, who must wonder if you be serious in your recommendation of a course so hasty and so unseemly.”

’Twas all against my desire, as I said, but according to my mind; and Mr. Hewson had nothing to urge against it, and so held his peace. It must have gone sorely against the grain with him to be so silenced.

Presently he rose to take his leave.

“Mrs. Murray,” said he, “’tis more than time we were on our way. May I pray you will be speedy in your preparations?”

“Nay,” I broke in. “Mr. Hewson, my sister leaves me not to-night.”

“Her husband expects her, madam,” said he. “Since you lay

such stress on the cogency of a husband's wishes, you will scarce put your will in competition with that."

"Nay, but under your favour, sir," said Mr. Browning, with a twinkle of a smile. "I am grieved to appear to go counter to you, but Rosa is not fit to travel to-day; my good brother is in ignorance of her illness of last night, else I am sure he had never desired her to ride. I will myself conduct her to Derry to-morrow, and that in better time; 'tis too late now for women and children to be out of doors."

Mr. Hewson's lips opened to reply to this—no doubt by way of protest, for the man hath a most absolute belief in the infallibility of his own judgment—but at the moment the door of the room was opened from without, interrupting us. He turned, and we all looked to see who was about to enter.

Two children, Rosa's son and mine own, stood in the doorway, with Margery behind them. It can scarce be a mother's partiality, I think, else my memory and my present judgment are alike at fault; but a lovelier picture than was formed by the pair mine eyes have never beheld. Nearly of an age, and exactly of a height, they were in respect of feature, complexion, and expression a perfect contrast. James, Rosa's boy, was slim for his height, and though he hath something of his mother's exquisite tint, 'tis evident that by-and-by he will be dark; he hath brown eyes, and his hair, though still golden fair, hath dark shadows. He hath at times, and had that day remarkably, a look of great depth and rapture in his beautiful wide-opened eyes: 'tis the look of a little angel that hath been charged with a message from heaven—as yet he lacks the words to declare the same, and so can do no more than to look it. My Roland is in every point the opposite of his cousin; as lusty a child as ever I set eyes on, he hath his father's sunny hair and blue laughing eyes. He seems the very embodiment of earth at its best, as the other hath borrowed some of his beauty from heaven.

They stood for a moment hand-in-hand in the doorway, and then each child ran to his mother. How the mothers responded to their advance 'tis sure scarce needful for me to set down.

There was one regarding us, however, that had little sympathy with us. Master Hewson knows nothing of the feelings of a parent, and he hath no liking for children; their ways, I should judge, have too much of Nature and of life to be pleasing to one whose opinion of Nature is that she is the mother of corruption,

and of life that it hath been bestowed upon us chiefly in order to be repressed and thwarted. He looked for a moment in grave disapproval, first at the one of us and then at the other ; then he spoke to Rosa.

"For shame, Mrs. Murray," said he sternly, "that you will fondle your child thus foolishly ; 'tis not thus that you entreat him in your husband's house. How shall he be disciplined and taught obedience if you thus teach him to know himself your idol ? You put me much in doubt of you in other respects, Mrs. Murray ; for the mother that will thus kiss her child openly on a week-day may well be suspected of kissing him secretly on the Sabbath."

I looked not to see how Rosa received this rebuke ; for myself, I clasped my boy the closer in mine arms.

"Ah, but, Mr. Hewson," said I, "it is God Himself that hath filled the hearts of mothers with love to their children ; and, sure, of all His gifts to His creatures, 'tis the dearest and the best."

"Like all His other gifts, madam," said he sharply, "it is capable of being carried to excess, and then it is no better than any other excess. God hath given you hunger, but He means not that you should eat to gluttony ; and thirst, but it is sin to drink to drunkenness. Love of children ! Yes, truly, in strict moderation, 'tis a good thing enough ; but when indulged out of measure, as with you, 'tis a temptation and a snare."

"Sir," said Mr. Browning, "had you been a father no doubt but you had learned to make another estimate of a parent's love. 'Tis never he that hath his child's welfare at heart that will be so ill a friend to him as to spoil him, but the very reverse."

"You will scarcely dispute, sir," said Mr. Hewson, girding up his loins, as it were, to the battle (sure a battle of words is a greater matter to him than any battle of blows)—"you will scarce dispute that indulgence beyond what is meet in any carnal passion is a danger to the immortal part of man. Love of children, gild it how you will, is but a carnal passion when all's said ; the very brutes possess it, and exhibit it in no small measure. Would you desire to see your sister and your friend lower themselves by their folly and fondness to the level of the brutes that perish ?"

"Why, sir, I will be bold enough," said Mr. Browning, "to crave your pardon beforehand, if I be plain to you to very roundness, and so will take the freedom to say that I think you meddle here with matters that are beyond your sphere. 'Tis God Himself, as Mrs. Hamilton truly says, that hath put into the hearts of

mothers everywhere the great love they bear to their offspring; and, truly, I would not think so meanly of His goodness as to suppose He hath done it for a snare to them. 'Tis a great light and a mighty strength to them in the hard and noble task of training the young souls; and though 'tis true, no doubt, that 'tis given in some sort to the brutes, that were rather, in my judgment, ennobling to the brutes than degrading to the emotion."

"This is all mighty specious, Mr. Browning," said Mr. Hewson; "and were you of my cloth I would not stick to answer you. But can you doubt, sir, that the contact of everyday matters hath a blunting effect upon the mind, blinding it to the finer issues of thought? As a minister, I claim my right to guide my flock, being specially set apart by mine office to think for them in those matters wherein they can scarce look to be able to think for themselves."

"To think for them, perhaps, Mr. Hewson," said Rosa, suddenly plucking up a spirit and a voice, her son upon her lap being her inspiration, I doubt not—"to think for them, and perhaps even to guide them, but scarce to lead them in bonds. No minister, were he the wisest that ever drew breath, can dispense them from the rule of their own conscience; 'tis that that must be their guide, blaming or acquitting."

"What, Mrs. Murray, you too!" said he, astonished as though a lamb had turned to withstand him—"you too! 'Tis past belief, the corrupting influence of evil example, even on one so gracious. For sure am I that you had not dared to answer me thus in your husband's house; no, nor will not, when I make this the subject of an evening's exhortation, as I shall very soon."

He rose to his feet.

"I must be going," said he; I had bidden him to stay for our supper, but he disregarded mine invitation altogether, answering me not by so much as a single word or a sign. "Be you sure of this, gentlewomen both," said he by way of farewell, "that he that indulges himself in idolatry heaps up retribution to his own soul; an idol is a sure rod in the hand of an avenging God." And so left us, without a word of salutation.

Captain Browning, as my representative, followed him from the room, leaving Rosa and me by ourselves with the children.

CHAPTER X.

Ô SANCTA SIMPLICITAS !

SCARCE had they left us, when Rosa put her son from her lap.

So did not I, being wroth in my heart with Mr. Hewson for his presumption in rating us like two froward children. What had he to do, I wondered, to settle for us when and how often we might kiss our children, he who had none ? Without meaning it, he had effectually undone his errand ; mine appetite for my father's protection was all gone, now that I remembered what it would be to accept along with it the sauce of his minister's admonitions. Even before my marriage, when these were familiar to me as my daily tasks, they were distasteful to me ; now disuse had made them altogether offensive and unendurable.

Presently the little James began to clamour to Rosa to be taken up again upon her knee. The mother in her could not resist his caresses. She took him again, and bent her head over his shining curls, and I could see that a tear dropped upon them.

"What, Rosa !" I exclaimed. "In tears ? You would never attach so much importance to anything Mr. Hewson might say ?"

"Why not ?" she answered, veering round upon a sudden from the view she had held but a minute ago to sidè with him. "Is he not a good and holy man ? Is it not true what he said, that he is one set apart by his very calling to decide upon the lawfulness or sinfulness of what we do ?"

"Having renounced the Pope," said I flippantly, "I'd scarce acknowledge the right of any other man to do so much."

"Mary !" said she in a tone of reproof, and paused. "But oh, Mary !" she continued the next minute, "whether we have

the right or no, you know he claims it. And is it a little thing to be made the subject of his exhortations before the whole family ; to be held up to reprobation, as it were, until for very peace' sake I submit, whether I be convinced or no ? ”

“ A small thing, forsooth ! ” said I in a sudden heat of indignation, so keenly did this her fear recall to me Mr. Hewson's dealings with myself in former years. “ No, indeed, it is not to be borne ! I wonder that you will so much as think of enduring such insolence from any man, were he a minister ten times over. Complain to Wamphray : ask him to protect you from it. ”

“ My dear Mary, ” said she, smiling, as one might figure it, through rain, “ you have certainly forgotten what Mr. Hewson's position is in your father's house. Complain to Wamphray indeed ! What do you think he'd do if I did ? Interfere with the minister's authority and in my behalf ? He were far more like to support him against me. And if they were to fall out, 'tis Wamphray, I do verily think, that would have to shift his quarters, not he. ” She paused again, and then again continued, her voice breaking and changing so that I pitied her for all she angered me. “ But when all's said, ” said she, “ 'tis being convinced I dread more than being coerced. I care less that he should impose his will on my obedience than his opinion on my conscience. ”

“ I wonder to hear you, Rosa ! ” said I, a little vexed with her for her tenderness. “ Is this fit language for a woman that is a Protestant ? ”

Captain Browning returned at the moment, and I appealed to him.

“ Come here, ” I said to him, “ and listen to a tale of a Protestant director as absolute as ever was Catholic priest since the beginning of the world. Here is Master Hewson at the head of the spiritual affairs of my father's house. Here is Rosa more than half ready to submit to him, even in a matter wherein her judgment accords not with his ; partly for peace' sake and partly for fear of his tongue, which is as bad as the pillory. Her husband, so she says, is more likely to support him than her should she be driven to resist. Whatever he says, they all agree to ; what he permits, they allow themselves in ; what he disapproves, they regard as a thing unlawful, and even accursed if the disapproval be emphatic. ”

“ 'Tis a highly-coloured picture, ” said Mr. Browning, smiling.

“ 'Tis done from the life, I assure you, ” I rejoined. “ Ask

Rosa else, though she be but a half-hearted witness, being much inclined to admit his right to all that I say."

"Surely," said she, "'tis at least half admitted in the man's mere office. What is the use of ordaining a man a minister if he be not——"

"To rule instead of to serve?" I finished for her as she paused, clean forgetting my manners in the heat of the discussion.

"There can sure be little question of the unlawfulness of such a claim," said Captain Browning; "though I marvel less that it should be allowed than that men should set it up."

"Less!" said I, astonished.

"Yes, truly," said he, with a twinkle far back in his eye, but yet, methought, with something as keen as mine own feeling deeper yet than that. "Submission to such a claim," said he, "is easily understood, when you remember the difficulty your ordinary man hath in coming to any conclusion whatever outside his own ordinary affairs of every day. I feel it myself whenever I am met by a spiritual issue. He that would save me the pain of decision were a friend indeed! I am but a plain sailor; sure, questions in casuistry are out of my sphere, to say nothing of the further embarrassment that, when with labour of mind I have arrived at an opinion, 'tis great odds but my nearest neighbour may be ready to come to blows with me to compel me to alter it. See what pains we be saved, and what heart-burnings into the bargain, if we both agree to be led by some other man—say, for argument's sake, by our minister."

I laughed.

"You may be plagued with such an infirmity of decision as you describe," said I, thinking the contrary of him while I said it. "But I am very certain that my father hath no difficulty of the sort." At that both he and Rosa fell to laughing also. "And yet," I continued, "of all Mr. Hewson's followers, he is the heartiest and the most undoubting."

"'Tis the exact contrary with him," said Mr. Browning, still laughing. "But extremes meet, as they tell us; and the result is the same. His opinions are so strong that he thinks them certainties; Mr. Hewson's agree with his in every point. Now, 'tis an indisputable fact that when a man tells me the thing I am sure of, I am sure he is telling me the thing that is true. Mr. Murray, therefore—it follows of course!—hearing Mr. Hewson say always the thing that he himself is sure of, is sure that he

says always the absolute truth; and he that says always the absolute truth, wherein falls he short of infallibility? 'Tis a demonstration—and the application is that he is one to be followed without swerving or doubting. With your father, belief in Mr. Hewson hath come to so great a height that I think, were they to disagree—to be sure, it is a thing most unlikely—but were it to happen, I think—I do verily think—that Mr. Murray might go so far as to consider whether he might not himself be in the wrong."

I laughed again.

"Nay," said I; "if Mr. Hewson can do miracles, we may as well submit to him at once and have done with it."

"This is all very well, and very amusing," said Rosa, with her brother's sparkling of the eye, but like him, as I thought, with a ground of serious interest beneath the light surface. Her arms were close around her son, who had fallen asleep upon her lap. "You show much subtlety in your apprehension of the relations between Mr. Murray and his minister, whom yet you will not go so far as to call his spiritual guide; and yet it is a fact that I have seen Mr. Hewson in the very mood of an oracle, as mysterious and as imperative! But it sets me a-marvelling that my brother, who hath but just ended his confession, wherein he professed himself so conscious of his liability to error, should forthwith fall a-quarrelling with one that desires to assume that same good office towards him, of guide and director. Sure, what would you have?"

"My guide by force? 'tis little argument of his fitness for the post," said Mr. Browning, with a change of tone that was both sudden and striking. "You ask what I would have?—faith, I would have him that aspires to so delicate an office show at least some small sense of his share in that same weakness. Is he not human like myself, and as apt to err? sure, he shows it most broadly, to my thinking, in that very article of his claim to rule the consciences of others, his equals. Advice, to the best of his faulty human judgment, he might offer with modesty, and I might accept it with gratitude, if mine own endorsed it. But how far unlike this is Mr. Hewson's attitude towards you!"

"'Tis at the least excusable," said Rosa, "that he should desire to have me go by his matured opinion, rather than by mine own careless impressions. He pushes it too far, it is true, but the meaning is good."

"No doubt," said Mr. Browning, "had he one touch of humility to temper his imperiousness. But now, Rosa—waverer that you are; for I thought you gave Mr. Hewson a very good answer, and one that he deserved—but tell me this: what is to hinder you from having an opinion of your own as matured as his, and as much to be trusted, instead of those careless impressions that you speak of?"

"Ah!" said Rosa, with a quick glance at the sleeping child in her arms, "'tis the deceitfulness of riches, past question. My darling!" said she, stooping to touch his forehead with her lips. "Your question is only too easy to answer, brother," said she, looking up at him where he stood. "More shame for me!"

Waverer she was as she spoke; for there was that in her face that went to and fro between tears and laughter; but however tempered by the laughter, it was the tears that came from the deeper source. Her brother looked at her with much the same face as she at her son.

"Rosa," said he very softly, "I begin to think that 'twas because you feared to be convinced by Mr. Hewson that you took courage to contradict him."

"It was so, exactly," said she, with a covert half-smile to me. For this was the very thing she had confessed to me before he entered the room. 'Twas a strange trick of these two, and one I often noticed, to think, as it were, each other's thoughts, and speak each other's words unwittingly.

He stood for a minute silent and pondering. Then he spoke, with a more weighty earnestness than ever I heard from any other lips.

"I would not emulate his arrogance," said he, "nor presume to tell you your duty, for all I be your brother and was once your guardian. But, Rosa, were I in your place, I would be beforehand with him, and have my mind made up before he hath the chance to determine it. You told him very truly that it was not in his power to dispense you from obedience to your own conscience. But if it is your own conscience you must obey, then certainly it is your own conscience, undisguised by any man's gloss, that you must listen to."

"But what if I mistake its orders?" asked she.

"Then I ask you again," said he—" 'tis the old question that we can never get away from—who may not? Is he more assured

from error than yourself? You will grant me that he is not; but I go further—much further—than that: I hold that even if you do mistake its orders—nay, even if your conscience be itself in error—it is yet your duty to be guided thereby, and to bring all other guidance to its test before you yield to it.”

“A paradox,” said I, thinking within myself that it was a paradox savouring mightily of Anabaptistry.

“A paradox, no doubt,” he replied to me, “but a verity none the less.”

“Scarcely, I think,” said Rosa, “for see where it would lead you: the most wicked actions—you could not condemn them if you believed them to spring from a true sense of duty.”

“Could I not?” said he. “I said not so, I am sure.”

“Why,” said I, “even those actions of the King’s, that you hold so evil that they are our justification for renouncing him—those actions that we all combine to denounce—upon your own showing you cannot condemn him for them.”

“I cannot, nor I do not,” said he, with a half-smile at my vehemence. “If his conscience did verily require them of him, he had no choice but to obey. But it is not forbidden, that I can see, to put the question: Whether a man with a conscience so at variance from the consciences of the great majority of his subjects can be fit to bear rule over them. Him, if I hold him governed by a pure wish to do the right, I cannot condemn; but ’tis by what he does that I must gauge the rightness of his apprehension thereof, and I hold him one whose conscience hath directed him amiss—far amiss—as a compass might point to the south instead of to the north. His actions carry their own condemnation, as I think; for he that is so bent as the King on his right to choose his own Church, how can he refuse the same to his subjects? He is self-convicted in that article, had he but the eyes to see it. But yet I believe him truly desirous to do the thing he deems his duty, and ’tis partly for this reason that I would fain refer the matter to the arbitrament of Heaven, the ancient wager of battle.” He paused. “And therein,” he ended gravely, “may God defend the right.”

“Amen,” said Rosa.

“And amen,” said I. “Though I say ‘Amen,’ ” I added the next moment, “with a certain reservation—to wit, that the right be on our side.”

“It is even but too natural,” he admitted ruefully. “But I

would fain say it without reference to mine own believing ; and if it be otherwise with me, then God amend my meaning."

He was become mighty grave as he spoke these words. We fell quickly into his mood.

"I fear," I told him, "that I cannot follow you in all you say ; I think you go too far—I mean with reference to the duty of being led by our own private consciences, and by these alone."

"I fear I can," said Rosa at my side. "I'd rather close mine eyes to it, for all that ; 'tis a privilege I have little liking to, that same of independence."

"The voice of God," I said, pursuing mine own thought—"conscience, that is the voice of God speaking in our hearts, can never, sure, lead us so far astray as the King hath gone !"

"I nothing doubt but it is the voice of God," said Mr. Brown-ing. "But speaking, as you say, in our hearts, it hath but poor interpreters, misleading as harbour-lights seen through a shifting fog ; and yet, where else is any light or any hope ? Lady," said he to me, "you have not had your ship to bring to port, through the storms and mists of the channel, as I have, else had you learnt both to know your judgment for as faulty as it is, and to trust it in spite of its faultiness. What are you smiling at ?"—to Rosa.

"I was but wondering," said she very slyly, "if the whole race of pilots had become extinct."

If he smiled at her sauciness—which had yet its core of earnest—it diverted him no whit from the matter in hand.

"For once that they can steer you, each in his own narrow channel," said he, "there are a thousand times where you must steer yourself—ay, and with none to help you should you fall upon destruction. I must beg pardon for my presuming," said he to me, "for, sure, 'tis nothing less in a man like me, plain to very rudeness, to attempt to handle so great subjects. But to say the truth, this one of all others doth set me preaching in mine own despite. 'Tis the very pith and marrow of our Protestantism ; 'tis the prime gain of all our struggles ; this, of freedom from those that stood between our souls and our God. If we lose it—if through diffidence or weakness we let it slip from our grasp—what have we gained that is worth the coil we have kept ?"

His eyes had lit up like flames, and glowed with the fire of his vehemence. I found it greatly to my mind to see a man of action thus carried away by a thing so intangible as a thought.

"I am with you in the principle," I answered him. "I demur only to the length you carry it. I cannot but think that you push it too far."

"Madam," said he, with a voice of conviction, "it is the principle that lies at the very heart of greatness; in the service of God, no less than in other matters, it shines every way, like a candle in a clear lantern; and there is nothing, I think, too remote to be reached by its rays. Though who," continued he, with a gesture of self-contempt—"who am I that I should speak of greatness, either in the service of God or of my country? 'Tis set for ever beyond my reach; 'tis almost out of my view. I, the plainest of plain sailors; my ship a mere victualler; my calling truly hath little to do with such matters; 'tis with routine, far more than conscience, that I must concern myself. Were I a fighting sailor even, and in a King's ship, there were a chance of drawing my sword for my country. But as it is——"

"'Twere an easy matter, no doubt, to make the change," said I, "if you have it so deeply at heart."

For the man's voice thrilled as he spoke with his eagerness.

"Nay," said he, "I can scarcely say that I desire it; that is the strange thing. My *conscience*," said he, "that I hold it so unquestionably my right and privilege to obey, doth tell me to abide in mine own appointed calling, and to discharge the duty that hath fallen to my lot, trifling though it be. If there be greater service for me to do, I nothing doubt but it will find me where I am," said he slowly, and with a half-smile. "A few more cargoes safely brought to hand—a passenger or a message taken where they be desired—that is the limit of the likelihood. And yet," he went on, "I cannot chose but ponder the great subjects; I turn them over and about in my mind, and form mine own conclusions, for all the world as if I were a minister like Mr. Hewson. If it stood with your good liking, now," said he, "I would fain tell you a little tale that hath passed through my mind more than once while we have been talking; it is one very pertinent to the subject we have been debating."

I signified my desire that he would proceed.

"I would wager that I know the story," said Rosa, smiling.

"You were very forgetful else," said her brother, "for many and many's the time you have heard it. 'Tis one I love to repeat, for it hath often been a happy guide to me in my perplexities. 'Tis a story of John Huss, the reformer and martyr," said he to

me, "a saying of his at his burning. You know, doubtless, the main facts of it."

"Of his death? Yes," I said. "How he was lured from safety upon a safe-conduct, which was basely violated, and burned to death at the stake for his faith—a holy martyr if ever there was one."

"A holy martyr, past question," said Mr. Browning. "I wonder if you will admit something of the spirit of the martyr in him that was the other actor in the tale? The martyr did."

"Tell it," I said, "and we shall see."

"It was at his burning," said Mr. Browning. "All was ready; he was fastened to the stake, the faggots were piled about him, the soldiers stood around ready to set fire to them. At that moment there appeared, making his way through the crowd, a wretched peasant, lean, ragged, aged, loaded with a great faggot of wood, as great as he could carry, on his back. 'Hold,' he cried; 'let me add this faggot to the pile; I bring it to help to burn the heretic.' But when it was placed he was not satisfied. It was not near enough to Huss. He desired, he said, that it should be part of the very wood that should consume him, and that he should see and be sure that it was so. At that the soldiers fell to jeering him for his folly, the crowd to blaming him for his rancour. No one would put forth a hand to help him to place it to his mind. Then Huss spoke to him. 'Have I ever done any harm to you or yours,' said he, 'that you show such bitterness against me?' 'To me or mine? None,' said the man. 'Then why do you desire so greatly to lend a hand to my burning?' said Huss. 'Because you are a heretic,' said the peasant—'a heretic accursed and hateful to God, if not to man. He that helps to kill you is doing God service. The wood in our valley is scarce this year and dear; the winter, they tell us, will be a hard one. I am poor and old, and shall dearly miss this faggot that I bring. Therefore I would not have it wasted; I desire that it bear its part in burning a heretic off the face of the earth. So shall my sacrifice be pleasing to God; so may it save my soul alive.' Then Huss put forth his own hand, and helped the peasant to place the faggot to his wish. '*O sancta simplicitas*,' said he. 'Perhaps this thy faggot may help to save us both.'"

The water stood in mine eyes as he ended.

"It was a Christ-like saying," said I.

"None was ever more so," said he. "But the peasant—he that was commended of the martyr—what say you of the spirit he showed?"

"It was the clean contrary of Christ-like," said I quickly. "A rancorous spirit and a bitter, nowise admirable to me."

"And yet the martyr praised it," said he, and so was silent, to let me consider the marvel. Sure, at the moment I thought it no less.

As I bent my mind to it, there came a woman out of the dusk of the doorway, and stood beside us. It was old Annot Wilson, the gardener's wife. She had come with Margery into the room to fetch away the children, and so had heard something of what had been said.

"Never praise him, sir," she said to Mr. Browning, with a little visible trepidation in her manner, as of one that knew herself presuming; she is, indeed, a civil woman enough, and hath never forgotten her place that I remember but this once. "Never heed his martyrdom. Was he ocht mair than a man for that? My certie, he was far astray that would lippen to works for salvation, let alane sic a wark as that, sinfu' an' deevilish baith in the thocht an' in the actin'."

And with that she dropped her curtsey and was gone with Roland in her arms.

I, as though there needed no more than to show me the image of my narrowness to cure me thereof, felt as though a veil were drawn away from before mine eyes. Annot, poor woman! had no desire but to set the truth before us. She did, I believe; but how differently from her meaning! 'Tis a strange thought this; I have often pondered it since.

"It is true," I said to Mr. Browning, "that he did the best he knew, and that he spared not to make some sacrifice for his faith, such as it was."

"And that," he rejoined, "if it be not the whole of salvation, is at least the beginning of grace. To do the best we know—is it not the first step we take on the Way of Life?"

CHAPTER XI.

HOW THERE CAME NEWS TO CLONCALLY OF THAT WHICH MIGHT
HAVE BEEN A MASSACRE.

NOT much of any interest passed in the first fortnight after my husband's escape from Cloncally. Things went on from day to day in their accustomed course; save, to be sure, that daily and almost hourly there crept into the ordinary rule of the house a greater caution, a more warlike order. 'Twas a natural thing enough, when one comes to think of it, that, having lost our chief defender, we should look more sharply than formerly to the means whereby we might fill his place. Not, truly, that ever Captain Hamilton had much time on his hands to see to the defence of his own house; but then, had we ever stood in need of his presence for our safety, it had been at the least possible that we might have it. Now, let us need it never so sorely, there was but slender hope of it, therefore it behoved us to cast about for means whereby we might attain to stand on our own feet, as one might phrase it, and suffice for ourselves.

We were but copying herein the example that had long been set us by most of the other houses of the county, and for that matter, by all I could hear, by most Protestant houses throughout all Ireland. There were none in our neighbourhood, I know, but had done for weeks as we now proceeded to do also. This was nothing less than to turn the house, every evening of our lives, into a fortress—a fortress as strong as we could make it. All doors, both of house and offices, were shut before sundown, and secured as if we meant to stand a siege. The windows were all shuttered and barred from within, and in the shutters of those on the lower stories were loopholes, through which our men might

fire on any enemy. In the entrance-hall was placed a stand of arms ready loaded. They caused as much alarm to some of the women—foolish souls!—as ever they were like to do to any enemy. The men were all quartered in the mansion-house itself, and took it in turns to mount guard throughout the night; and, indeed, it brought me nigh to laughter to see how well they played the soldier; for one night, about six of the clock, my brother Wamphray having ridden out from Derry to visit me, it was wonderful to see the parade that Cargill made of reconnoitring before he would open the door to him; nor would he do it even when he was satisfied as to who our visitor was, except two footmen stood beside him with muskets loaded and levelled, and he himself had his gun laid ready to his hand upon the table.

Wamphray commended them highly for all this diligent wariness, on the ground that 'tis too late to lock the door when the steed is stolen; saying that in the state the country then was, it being impossible to tell friend from foe, he was the truest friend to peace and order that afforded the least temptation to violence or aggression.

Now, there was no one at Cloncalla (save perhaps, as I said a minute ago, one or two of the maids) that was given to idle tremors and fears. Cargill had served in his youth, and most of the men in the yard knew the smell of powder, and found it relishing. But though one may be able to look steadfastly on fair fighting, even in prospect (when 'tis far worse than the reality), 'tis quite another matter when it comes to being butchered by a mob of wild savages; and there was never a man of the Protestants in Ulster in those days that dared to say at night, when he laid his head upon his pillow, that he would open his eyes peacefully on the morrow's light. For there was ill blood between the Ultoghs and the men of Ulster—ill blood and a constant chafing sore. Nor was it altogether between the Irishry and the Englishry; among these latter there was division; and it was greatly a matter of religion whether a man sided with his own countrymen or against them. It will be hard for future generations to believe this, but so it was; even at this day, as I write, there be many among the Catholics that would sooner see their countrymen at the mercy of the Irish than to have things settled as they be.

Never a day passed, in the end of November and the first of December, but some disquieting news came to our ears. 'Twas daily hearing how the Irishry and the low Catholics were gathering

together chain-bridles and skeans and half-pikes. The priests kept the same in their houses, for greater safety in the storing and ease in the distributing of them. Our own priest in the village, Father Gorman O'Neill, gave out in one week two score half-pikes and two score chain-bridles, and who but he?—and yet he hath but forty pounds a year to his cure. I had it from a sure source, and could well believe it, besides, from that which had come within mine own knowledge. For when Timothy the groom took my jennet to be shod, O'Shane, the blacksmith, told him very coolly that he must wait his leisure; "for," said he, "my hands are far too full e'en now to shoe ladies' horses." A fact that spoke for itself; for what Irishman would have dared to return such answer to his master, had he not looked to have the same presently under his feet, to be trampled upon at his pleasure?

Day by day the rumours grew and the fear increased. 'Twas become an old story, that of the disarming of the Protestants by Tyrconnel's orders; and though it was never obeyed in Ulster to the same degree as I believe it was in the South, yet the mere name of it took, as it were, the backbone out of us; as knowing that there was no help for us in our governors, who should, nevertheless, have been the praise and protection of us well-doers, and the terror of the others who did evil. Clean the contrary were they; and yet I know not but the discouragement of their conduct was a blessing in disguise, as stirring us up to do the best we could for ourselves.

All this time there came out of Derry but two of these true men, and tall of their hands, that Captain Hamilton had given us charge to entertain. The rest, I could but conclude, had marched with their colonel to Dublin; for 'twas on the 23rd, but a day or two after Captain Hamilton's escape, that the regiment left Derry for that place. I believe I had the very last of the news of them; for about noon on that day there came an orderly spurring in haste into the court, the bearer of my Lord Mountjoy's parting courtesies, and desiring, of his part, to hear that I had not suffered in health from the late excitement; to which I returned such answer as seemed fit. A soldier's wife should have understood how strange a thing it was that the garrison should be withdrawn from a town before the incoming regiment was on the spot to replace them; and it was well enough known that no other regiment had marched into Derry. But I protest I thought

nothing of it at the time ; nor, among all the old soldiers I had in my employ, nor from any of those that came to see me, did I hear so much as a whisper of its strangeness. Yet now, to look back upon it, it does seem well-nigh as incredible that the thing should have drawn so little notice, as that Richard Talbot, soldier as he was, or once had been, should have done it.

Still, another week passed by quietly enough ; nothing befell of any interest, though the threatening rumours came in thicker and thicker. 'Tis ever the way with your great storm, whether in the sky or among ourselves, to go on threatening and threatening, piling deeper darkness upon that which was dark enough before, till of a sudden they burst upon you with peal upon peal of thunder, and lashing rain, and danger and fear to boot.

And as, in the gathering tempest, there wants not the flying gleam of sunshine to give force, by contrast, to the gloom ; so here likewise we had our burst of brightness—a glorious one. Ah, sure ! no mere freak of driving cloud, but a true earnest of the sun, steadfast above the storm, and of the shining time that should follow it, its fury being spent.

Mr. Browning was he that brought me the tidings, coming into my presence on one of those days of waiting with a flush on his cheek and a fire in his eye that prepared me for the great news he brought. Sure, I had guessed it before ever he opened his mouth. I knew it was no matter of private import that had so moved this man as to give him the air of a prophet rapt out of himself for the glory of his message. And had not all men's hearts and eyes been turned for months to Holland ?

I rose to meet him, and remained standing, out of expectation of some communication that should command my reverence. And, sure enough, I had it.

" Ah, madam, you divine it ! " was his greeting to me, nothing else or less.

Aught personal would have been clean out of place in the mouth of such a messenger.

" I divine I know not what," I answered him ; " but there is ' glad tidings of great joy ' writ large upon your face to-day."

" The champion of our cause hath appeared, and hath declared himself," said he. " The Prince of Orange hath landed in Torbay—nay, he may be in London by this time, for aught I know ; 'twas on the fifth of last month, three weeks ago and more, that he came ashore. 'Tis sure news, and truly, if ever it was the

duty of men to rejoice, 'tis ours this day, that see the end of all our troubles."

"Alas!" I said, shaking my head, "I doubt there be some of our troubles, at least, to come. King James will struggle hard before he renounces the cherished hope of years; he hath power at his back. There will be fighting. Who knows but the three kingdoms may be in a flame before our deliverance is assured?"

"Suppose they should," he flashed out upon me. "In faith, I little doubt but they will. But what man is he that will count the cost when the issue lies plain before him and the end is assured?"

"The end assured?" I repeated. "How can that be? Alas, sir! the gauntlet once thrown down, who can say which side will come out victorious?"

"Why, that will I," said he, "and venture my life upon my prophecy. The King hath another adversary to face this time than any he hath hitherto encountered. Ah, madam! this is no curled and scented darling, like Monmouth, that hath taken our cause in hand; 'tis a man, and a great one. There lives not such another leader; Berwick is a child in arms to him. And as he is, so are his soldiers—or such they grow. Fear, as it hath no place in his heart, so it abides not his presence. The meanest man in his army takes some tincture of his quality, as the loadstone touches all iron with its own temper. I cannot but foresee his triumph, he being such as he is and his cause so righteous. To doubt it were to question the goodness of God, that hath heard the cry of His people and is risen to deliver them."

How happy was I in his confidence! How near and how sure seemed victory and peace at that moment! Nor yet was his confidence misplaced. Victory we have this day; and Peace, sure it follows hard upon her footsteps. We saw them plain enough, and near, and so they were: our faith seemed already to be sight: our hope, possession. But betwixt us and them there was a great gulf fixed that we saw not or saw but dimly—a gulf of pain and effort—pain of our own bearing, effort of our own endeavouring. What champion could help us here, or close the gulf to save us? Why, none; Curtius himself could have done us no more good than the most ordinary mortal. Many and many a life was swallowed by that gulf before the first foot was set in safety upon the other brink. Even had we known all that lay before us, I

believe we had rejoiced more than we had feared at the first hearing of news so comfortable ; as it was, being so short of sight, both I and mine went about our daily tasks with hearts that sang in our breasts for joy of a load removed.

This confidence endured for two days, and then came news of a different sort that scattered it all to the winds. It was sent to me in a letter from our good friend and neighbour, Mr. Phillips, of Newtown-Limavady. The letter lies open before me as I write, whereof there is but little need, for in truth it lies as plain in my mind as ever it can to mine eyes ; and so, indeed, doth every incident pertaining to that time, down to the smallest and most trifling. It is as though my mind had been branded with an iron, like the cheek of a malefactor ; nor is this the case with the incidents alone ; but the reports that came to mine ears, true and false—the very converse that was held respecting them—sounds still in mine ears as I turn my thoughts back upon it—ay, even to the very manner and gesture of the speakers. 'Tis strange to myself, for it was not till long afterwards that I knew the significance of many of the things that are freshest in my memory.

Here is Mr. Phillips' letter, which was brought to me by a mounted servant :

“MADAM,

“I learn from a sure source that the regiment new levied by my lord the Earl of Antrim marches this week to Derry, being commanded there to take the place of my Lord Mountjoy's that were lately withdrawn. You shall understand that this regiment is but a raw rabble, scarce to be called soldiers at all ; they are, indeed, no better than 'meer Red-shanks,' as the country people dub them, and so poorly paid as is a shame to hear of. Moreover, my Lord Antrim himself rides not with them, but is to follow them at a day's interval.

“I send you this news to the end that you may take order for your own safety should they chance to come nigh to your house of Cloncall, whereof there should be but little fear, were they well-drilled men, you lying so far off from the straight road to Derry. But I doubt they may rove in hope of plunder, being all but desperate men. And you are out of the way of succour should danger happen you. I would gladly send you a man or two of mine if they be needed. Trusting that you will choose the wisest course, whether to go into Derry or to provide a competent strength

in your own house, and commending you to the protection of God,
I take leave to subscribe myself, madam,

"Your well-wisher and humble servant to command,
"GEORGE PHILLIPS."

Before I had well done reading this letter I was fallen into a brown study, computing how many men I could get together and arm; and tell them how I might, I could make but a dozen of them, counting gardener, grooms and all. This was a slender force, truly, to withstand a regiment should it come my way. But, then, it seemed in the last degree unlikely that it should. As to deserting my house, the thought of it came not into my head, so visionary seemed any real danger from my Lord of Antrim's Redshanks. For who in his senses would go from Newtown-Limavady to Derry by way of Cloncall, that is as much as four miles out of the straight road?

The first thing to do was certainly to send a grateful acknowledgment to Mr. Phillips, both of his good counsels and of his offers of help, and that was speedily despatched by his man Tomkyn, the same that had brought his master's letter to me. That done, I began to cast about in my mind what things might be done by way of precaution in the house. The men made so great a pedantry of their watchfulness that there was no possibility of doing more in that direction; but I did begin to foresee that if any of these new-levied men should come in our way, they were like to be more dangerous on account of their hunger and misery than on account of their ill-will to us English. Your hungry man, as Annot Wilson hath it, is ever your angry man. And therefore, more, I protest, to be making some use of Mr. Phillips' well-meant warnings than for any necessity that appeared, I gave orders that a quantity of provision should be prepared and ready dressed, as much as would be a sufficient meal for fifty men. There was little fear of its being wasted, for mine own household was become a large one, counting men and women, and they might be depended on to relish their meat.

Some inkling of Mr. Phillips' warning crept about in the house by means of these orders; and I saw sidelong glances, and heard now and then timid whispers, of which I took no manner of notice. But on the Thursday night of that week the timidity suddenly shot up into a mighty scare, so that it could no longer be overlooked or disregarded. Late at night—as late, I believe, as eleven of the

clock—there came a great knocking and calling for admittance at the door which leads into the yard; he that made the outcry proved to be a groom of Mr. Phillips', not his servant Tomkyn, but another man whose name I have forgotten; not that 'tis of any importance to be set down, if I bore it in mind. What I well remember is the face of fright he brought into my presence, along with the letter whereof he was the bearer. I never saw the like; his eyes went to and fro in his head, his breath came thickly in short gasps, like the breath of one that hath been running over-hard for his strength, and even his duty of respect to me could not hinder him from casting fearful glances over his shoulder, as though he looked to see something terrible at his back. I took the letter he carried, marvelling if this were one of the men that Mr. Phillips had sent to help me. A fool-faced fellow I thought him, and more like to be a charge upon us than any use in helping to defend the house.

The very superscription of the letter showed the haste wherein Mr. Phillips had writ it. Thus it ran:

“MADAM, AND DEAR FRIEND,

“The foremost company of Lord Antrim's regiment is arrived at Newtown, and report hath made them no worse than they are. Raw wild Rapparees of the Irishry, scarce a man of them is able to ask for what he wants in the English tongue. There is besides the company a great rabble of boys and women, as the manner of the Ultoghs is when they intend slaughter. I pray God that their meaning be less than my fear, but truly I like not the looks of them, if the rest of the regiment be no better than this company.

“I am sending an express to Derry with the news, and the man hath orders to go to Cloncallly in the first place, to the end you may have time to do what seems fit for your own safety. My counsel would be that you should go into Derry with all convenient speed, to-night if you can do it; for in truth these are no times, nor Ireland is no country, for a woman to live by herself in a house so far removed from succour as Cloncallly is. If this may not be, send me but a line by any sure hand (but no man that you count on to guard the house), and I will send you some men of mine; they shall leave Newtown so soon as the last of the Red-shanks shall have passed it, and can easily pass them, being mounted, and be with you in time enough.

"And so, dear lady, commending you once more to the protection of God, I remain,

"Your very humble servant to command,

"GEORGE PHILLIPS."

Now that all these events lie behind me, at one distance off, as one might say—like a picture, wherein all the parts may be seen at once, and the proportions compared—I can see how wise was Mr. Phillips' advice. For our case was exactly as he put it; there was no neighbour near on whom we could count for aid, let our need be never so great. The men in the village were as like to take part against us as with us, though, sure, they have ever had enough kindness shown them by Captain Hamilton and his people to bind them to his fortunes. But when will your Irishman take any part, however righteous, that is discountenanced by his priest?

But as I read the letter, this prudent course seemed to me no better than a cowardly one. All that had been urged in favour of my continuing at Cloncalla at the first, when mine own mind had been to leave it, came back upon me then with tenfold force. Perhaps it was the soldiers' blood that I have in my veins that woke up in me at the moment when 'twas wanted—I know not; but had I fled from Cloncalla with that haste that was counselled in Mr. Phillips' letter, I had seemed to myself like the dastard who, for his own poor safety, deserts the post that hath been committed to his charge.

Even as I read the letter, with such thoughts as these flashing to and fro in my mind like the wild-fire over the marsh at night, there came to mine ears such a hubbub, such crying and wailing, as I protest I never heard the like, even in our worst troubles. 'Twas more like the noise that one may hear from the wild Irish, at their wakes or at their feasts, than aught one might expect to hear in the sober family of a gentleman like Captain Hamilton. No grass, as the saying is, had time to grow under my feet, before I was among the silly frantic creatures; sure, I know not if they thought I was struck deaf, so as not to hear the riot they made. Cargill was among them, trying vainly to make them listen to reason; they cried but the louder at every word he said. But at the first sight of their mistress there was none left that dared continue the unseemly disturbance; they stood silent in my presence like sheep in the penfold, or like rebellious children that know

they have earned a rating, and expect it forthwith. Nor was there one among them ready to answer me when I desired to know why they behaved them so wildly. At last one took courage to murmur under her breath "that it was very well for me to ask them such a question."

"Well for me?" I answered her quickly. "An if it be, what is amiss for you? Am not I a woman like yourself? If it be well for me, what is there to fear for my maids?"

At that the foolish thing fell to shedding tears; but she was none so easy to silence, for all her softness. Presently she took heart to murmur again, "that I bore such a heart as nothing daunted me."

"But as for me and the rest," she went on, gathering courage with the sound of her own voice, "we go about our work all day trembling for fear; and we lie down at night not knowing what horror may be upon us before the morning's light."

"Do you so?" said I. "And if any such horror should come upon the house, shall I be out of it? Shall I not be the very first to suffer, being the head? Sure, if I see no cause for terror, you and your fellows may keep your minds easy enough."

Sure, 'twas as if these words woke up anew the clamour that had been stilled, mixed with such words as showed me that the foolish groom had thought it pity to hold his tongue for one little minute, and had no sooner got him downstairs than he had blabbed his errand. Sure, he had infected every soul of them with his mad terror of the Red-shanks as fast as ever the plague runs through a house. The folly of it all angered me so bitterly that I gave them as sound a rating for their fear, which they scarce could help, as ever I did for their idleness, which they could. But it was to no purpose. One broke out a-weeping after another, and nothing would serve them but to be sent to Derry without delay.

"Well," I told them, "if 'tis the Red-shanks you're afraid of, you are like enough to meet them if you go to Derry; 'tis the very place they're bound for. But here, what likelihood is there that any men in their senses will go four miles of a roundabout to rabble a house that hath neither the name of riches nor of great store of weapons? You're safe enough here if you would but think it. Go to your beds, and have more respect for God's providence than to think He would smite with danger and trouble them that know so little how to profit by the same."

At that Cargill, standing behind me in the doorway, carried his

hand to his forehead, after the fashion of a soldier saluting. I saw him out of the corner of mine eye, and turned towards him.

"Brave words, madam," said he, "if they mean that danger and trouble will never daunt the heart that can profit by them."

Faith, I had intended no such meaning, though no doubt the words I had used pointed to it. And at Cargill's salute the strangest feeling passed through my mind, that, having claimed for myself, though unthinkingly, some share of such a quality, I was bound more than ever to shrink from no test that came my way. It passed through my head, and was gone straightway till this moment that I recall the affair to describe it; and yet I nothing doubt but it made me the stiffer to stay in mine own house in spite of counsels of prudence and fears of the faint-hearted.

For their own sakes solely I tried to reason my maids out of their terror, which seemed to me of the sort that makes your terrified horse, for instance, leap from a precipice that will break his neck. But I might as well have debated the thing with the stone of the wall, as the saying is. Before I left them I had given them leave to quit Cloncall at daybreak; against my will, very surely, but not at all to my discomfiture. Little discernment was needed to perceive that we were nothing weakened, should real danger arise, by the absence of such as could do nothing to avert it but to weep.

At dawn of day they had permission to depart; and at dawn of day they departed, long before the tardy groom thought it possible to be gone upon his master's errand, though that was of so great importance. The men in the yard flouted them for their folly; but what cared they for flouting, that were gone towards city walls and safety? Margery Hamilton and Annot Wilson were the only women that remained in Cloncall but myself; they were of another temper than those tremblers. I looked at my twelv' brave men as they went out of the house to their several duties, and truly I thought that we three and Roland were none so badly off; I feared not five times the number of such soldiers as Mr. Phillips described, mine being within walls and they in the open. It seemed a very pity that he should trouble himself and his servants to come to mine aid, that had already a good sufficiency of brave defenders.

It might be nine of the clock when Margery came to tell me that there was a boy at the door desiring speech of me.

"Like his impudence, too!" she remarked, half to herself. "A slip of a boy like that to come asking speech with the like of yourself at such an hour of the morning!"

"Do you know who he is," I asked her, "or what is like to be his errand?"

"I never cast eyes on him in my life before that I know of," said she. "And as to his business, 'tis for your own ear only, if you please. So he told me when I would have brought it to you in a more fitting manner than by the mouth of a little dirty spalpeen like himself."

Margery tossed up her head, and I thought I divined the cause of her displeasure with the messenger. She was mistaken in saying that it was the first time she had ever cast eyes on him, for all that; for it was the same boy Gorman O'Cahan, that we had fed and rested in Roland's nursery a month before. I knew him the moment I saw him. He was scarce so lean as he had been, and not near so wan and sickly to look at; but the droll, good-humoured smile was not to be forgotten or mistaken. I called him by his name at once.

"What do you want of me, Gorman O'Cahan?" said I.

At which he broke into that great smile of his. Certes, the largeness of his mouth makes up for the littleness of his nose and eyes, which yet have something in them that is friendly and faithful.

"Would your ladyship take me to some place where there's none can hear us speak?" said he. "It's yourself alone that must hear my errand."

Margery, at my back, muttered something about a beating; but there was that in the lad's face that spoke of urgency. I took him for a true man, in spite of my tire-woman's displeasure; and so brought him within doors and into the dining-room, shutting the door lest any one should hearken to that which did not concern him.

No sooner were we alone than my little Irishman's face went as solemn as the face of a bishop; down he dropped on his knees at my feet.

"Oh, me lady!" said he, in a tone to wring the heart, "do you wish to save your life? Do you wish to save the life of the little jantleman? Do ye care anything for the big woman that didn't want to let me inside the door of the house?"

"What do you mean?" I asked him, angry with myself

because my heart quivered in my breast, and my voice faltered in my throat.

Mr. Phillips' two letters had no wise fluttered me ; 'twas strange that the first words of a child should have power to move me so greatly.

"Me lady," said he, "I'm forbidden to mane a thing, an' sure 'tis little enough I've been told. But I know there's mischief on foot. There's skeans, for I've seen them. An' my mother gave me leave to come here and tell you that, but not a word more ; only that if you value your life, you're to beware how you let a man of the Irishry inside your doors, neither in the daytime nor in the night, but specially not at night."

From a grown person this speech would have moved me to laughter ; from a child, in all reason, it should have seemed more trifling still ; but, by some unknown power of persuasion, the lad's manifest belief in the shadowy fear he told of so vaguely took hold of me in mine own despite.

Seeing me something mazed, he rose from his knees and came close to me.

"'Tis Sunday—Sunday—that's to be the day," said he, almost in a whisper.

"The day for what ?" I asked him sharply.

"Oh, lady dear, 'tis yourself that knows as much as me !" said he, with his earnest face. "'Tisn't to the like of meself they'd tell much ; but, musha, haven't I got eyes in my head ? an' can't I keep my ears open ? They've dropped a word now and then that I've picked up, an' that's all, except what my mother told me to tell you—that there's mischief intended ; sure, haven't I done it ?"

I sat me down upon a chair.

"Where is your mother ?" I asked of him.

"At home, sure ; where would she be ?" answered he, opening his eyes.

"And your father—is he with her ?"

"Musha, no !" said he, breaking into his ready grin, "or it's little you'd a' seen of meself this morning. It's with the soldiers my father is nowadays, an' it's in Derry itself they mane to be this night, sure enough."

"And have you told me all your message ?" I asked him again.

"Ivery word, lady dear—ivery word," said he earnestly. "Not a word do I know but what I've told you. There's mischief in

the wind, an' it's Sunday that's the day; an' you'll be doin' wrong av you open your doors to *anny* man of the Irish, av he came to you wid niver such a distressful story. That's all."

And looking into the lad's earnest face, I saw that it was truly all. All he knew or suspected was either said or glanced at in these words. He saw in my face that I believed him, and once more that grin of his broke over his own, like one that hath prospered in a task whereto he hath set his will and his heart.

"It's meself that'll have to be going now," said he.

"No," said I; "you shall go into the kitchen first and have something to eat."

"'Tis like yourself to ax me!" said the boy; "but I couldn't do it. It's too long I'm here already. Musha! I might be seen about the place, an' then——"

"And then?" said I. "Well, what then? What if you were seen about Cloncalla?"

"Maybe it's a taste of a skean I'd get myself, for a handsel," said he.

He smiled as he said it. Care for himself was *like water on a duck's back*, as they say, now that he had cleared his mind of his warning to us.

"But wait a moment," I said. "I wish to give you something for a reward for coming so far to bring me this message."

"Never name it, lady dear!" said the boy anxiously. "Sure, there's not the thing I'd have taken to let it alone." And with that was out of the room, and would have been out of the door as quickly, save that it was locked and chained.

Cargill came to my call and opened it. He looked curious and a little stern to boot, and held it in his hand for a moment, as though to give me time for some explanation. But I spoke not a word to him at that time. I went to the threshold and looked after my little Irish friend; sure, he merited the title that would put himself both to labour and risk for no fee nor reward, save that of doing me some service.

But it was as if the pixies had carried off the lad from my very doorsill. Scarce a moment had passed since the door was opened, and already there was no more sign of him than of a figure rubbed off a slate. I stood and peered before me, and to left and right, into the shining frosty mist; but the little lad was gone as suddenly as any ghost.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE MESSENGER FROM NEWTOWN GOT NO FURTHER BACK
THAN TO CLONCALLY.

BUT through that same frosty haze I could catch the sound of one galloping in haste, riding, as it might be, for his life. That could not be my little messenger, or, if it were, then the pixies had him in very sooth; for the sound was at a good distance—nigh as far off as it could be to be heard. And it was coming nigher with every hoof-fall, not drawing away into silence. My Irish lad and his strange departure were blotted clean out of my mind, and I listened as though there were nothing else on earth but this new-comer and what his coming should signify. Cargill, smit by the same foreboding, came forth upon the doorsill at my side, peering forth into the mist as though to meet the *ill news half-way*, as the saying is. For the pace was over-speedy to bode of good. He that brings glad tidings rides at his leisure.

I remember that a shudder passed through me from head to foot. 'Twas the chill of the frosty air, nothing more; nor did I so much as fancy that 'twas anything more or more mysterious. But yet that mere bodily shiver seemed to mix itself with the shrinking of the mind from that fear which as yet we knew not, but which was speeding toward us, nearer with every second of time.

Speeding it was, and that at a great pace, for now could be discerned a certain labouring in the rhythm of the gallop, like the gait of a horse that is cruelly over-ridden. And it was to Cloncallly it was hastening—where else? There is none other house near to which 'twas even possible it should be bound. Even as we listened upon the threshold, the rider took the turning to the

courtyard, and the sound ceased upon the instant. Cargill was gone from my side as hastily, darting through the house like any boy, to and out of the courtyard door, to meet the messenger that had ridden so hard.

I came within doors like one in a dream. "Ill news travels fast!" I said to myself, as I shut the door and tried to bar it; but the bolt was over-heavy for my hand. That which the Irish lad had told me not ten minutes before mixed itself in my thought with that which I knew was at hand. In the merest superstitious folly, mine effort to secure the door seemed to my mind as an omen; should I succeed, then, I thought, we should weather the storm that threatened; should I fail, then we must succumb to the same. I put my whole strength to the bolt, and it shot into its socket with a rusty growl. And my spirits, however unwarrantably, threw off incontinent the gloom that had begun to weigh them down. Yet, as I turned into the dining-room, I found myself muttering that "Sunday was the day."

Presently I heard Cargill's voice in the passage without, encouraging some one with the assurance of safety; the next moment he was at the door of the room, half leading, half supporting a man that clung to his arm like one bereft of strength. This was none other than Colonel Phillips' messenger returned from Derry. Truly, if the man had looked fool-faced and fearful the night before, this morning he was ten times worse. His tongue refused to form the words he would have uttered; his knees shook so that he could not have stood before me, save for the help of Cargill's arm. I had heard before of men struck dumb and helpless with fear; now I saw it for the first time, and the sight was little to my liking.

"The Irish—the massacre" was all he could babble forth; and then again, in answer to all my questions, "the Irish" and "the massacre." Sure, I thought nought but that Derry lay in ruins, and every creature there a corpse in his blood, to see the man so amazed.

"What massacre?" I asked him sharply, for perhaps the fourth or fifth time. "Who have been slain? Be a man; pluck up a heart, and tell us."

Cargill, out of all patience, loosed his hold of the coward creature's arm, and fell instead to shaking him by the shoulder. He dropped upon his knees at my feet, having no power to sustain himself upright; but, sure, it was as if Cargill had shaken some

more words out of his throat, for they came with a rush—a thing so absurd that even at such a moment it set me smiling.

"The massacre that is to be on Sunday," said he; and then broke into a kind of wail: "Oh dear! oh dear! there won't be a man, woman, or child of the Englishry alive on Monday morning!"

As sharp a spasm of anger as ever I knew passed through me as I took in the meaning of what he said. An evil that was merely threatened, a danger that might be averted, to put a man into so deadly terror! I could have beaten him for his folly.

"A massacre that only is to be," said I, "and you are feared to death!" My voice trembled for very contempt as I spoke to him. "Why, man, there be two whole days to take order against it! Be a man, if you would not be thrust forth from my doors like a hound; pluck up a heart, and tell us what you heard in Derry to put you in such a taking."

But, Lord! it was as if my threat had knocked his senses all astray once more.

"Madam! madam!" cried he, catching at my skirts, and bursting into tears; "oh, my lady, for God's love! Oh, don't send me out of the house while the Red-shanks be upon the road! Let me stay here till they be out of the way."

I could not restrain myself from spurning the whining craven with my foot, not enduring to be touched by so base a creature. Cargill, that had with difficulty refrained from speech all this time, broke out at last.

"Saw ever mortal such a coward?" said he, with indignation. "Madam, give me but your leave to carry him into the barn. Tim and I will give him somewhat to moan for. I warrant I'll make him fear me as much as any Irish mob; and then perhaps he'll see fit to tell us what has put him into such a fright."

This terrible threat, whereat I could have smiled, had some effect upon the groom. He saw that there was no indulgence to be looked for from either one of us, and at last he seemed to make some effort to command his scattered wits.

"Oh, Master Cargill, sir!" said he, still weeping, "had you been the bearer of my news into Derry, and there heard news ten times worse—one terror on the back of another—perhaps you'd have had the sense knocked out of your head as well as me, for all so high as you hold it."

"I'd part with it, and welcome," said Cargill, forgetful of my presence, "before I'd demean myself like you."

"Silence, Cargill!" said I, displeased. "And you, sirrah, if you can so far command your fool fears, tell us your news, and let us be judges of their awfulness. Nay"—drawing back, as he put forth his hands to lay hold of my skirts once more—"be assured that if you do not do so, and that instantly, I will cast you from the door within the hour. Ay, though all the Ultoghs in the province were there with their skeans. Stand up on your feet, man! Stop whimpering like a maid, and speak out what you know!"

At that, as if my words had wrought a very miracle, and cast out a dumb devil of fear, sure enough my man stands up on his feet, and begins to rub his eyes with his knuckles—a sorry sight indeed.

"My lady," he began, speaking more like a rational being than I had heard him yet, "you know that I rid from this place to Derry before break of day this morning with my master's letter to Mr. Alderman Norman about the Red-shank soldiers."

"Ah," muttered Cargill at my back, "I should like to know how you came to be so well aware of what your master had writ in his letter, you——"

I took no notice of him, but listened to the groom.

"I delivered that letter, madam," said he, "and was bid to go into Mr. Alderman's kitchen with his servants to breakfast. I was refreshed, and was at the very point to depart, being in the hall awaiting Mr. Alderman's pleasure if he had any despatch to send to my master, when there comes to the door another Alderman, one Mr. Tomkyn, and inquires for Mr. Norman with a very fearful face on business of the last importance. So I—I—waited," he went on, becoming confused.

"You waited, I warrant," said Cargill behind me, in the same low voice—"oh yes, you waited; not a doubt of it! You thought as you'd carry home some account of that same important business, but not for Colonel Phillips' ear—oh no! I know your sort!"

"Cargill!" I said, turning round.

He begged my pardon.

"I waited," the man continued, "and, sure, madam, there wasn't long to wait; Mr. Alderman's servant was not even bid from the room while Mr. Tomkyn opened his business. 'Tis all over the city by this time."

"Well, now, and what is it, after all?" I asked him, desiring to cut short the commentary and be at the text.

"Madam, an it please you, 'tis what I told you before," said he.

"Heard one ever the like?" said I, out of all patience. "Must we drag the words out of you with punishment, as Cargill threatened? Why, you've told us nothing yet—nothing at all."

"Ah, then, my lady," said he, "'tis the massacre! Oh, me lady, 'tis the massacre. The Irish have fixed to slay man, woman, and child of the English; they're going to rise up everywhere throughout the province, and what can we do against so many? Sunday—Sunday's the day.' Again he began to shed tears. "There won't be a soul of the English left alive by Monday morning."

I stood silent. This tallied with the warning of Gorman O'Cahan.

"'Tis news as sure," went on the groom, "as Mr. Phillips' to you of the Red-shanks; and them I saw with my own eyes. You will see if they be not in Derry by nightfall."

I would have questioned that, if I could, but it seemed even too likely. A regiment duly commissioned of his Majesty to garrison the city! sure and indeed they must be admitted, were they never such scullogues. "Sunday was the day," said the groom; "Sunday was the day," Gorman had said before him. Faith, it seemed all too likely that, Derry being a place of strength whereto many might fly for safety, Lord Antrim's Red-shanks had been ordered there for the very purpose of putting it in possession of the Irish. No doubt it was in their commission to put man, woman and child of the citizens to the sword. Was ever such a treason on the part of a monarch before? and this towards a town that had shown no fault towards him, save that of professing the religion he had sworn at his coronation to protect and allow!

Even as I pondered it, I cast about in my mind for some circumstance that might give the lie to all these warnings and fears, but there was none—not one. To the contrary, mine unbelief sank overwhelmed beneath the load of evidence; one proof after another sprang up to confound me, out of things that were within mine own knowledge. Sure, I have already set down many of them in these pages; it needs not to repeat them over and over again.

But that we should sit down quiet and submit to our fate!—be

slain like sheep in the shambles, as this fool groom would, were he left to his own helpless terrors! If the King's treason was difficult to credit, this was clean impossible. I knew my countrymen to well. And sure, even I myself had some duty to discharge towards our defence.

"Sirrah," said I to the groom, "here is no question of remaining at Cloncallly till the Red-shanks be safe in Derry. You must ride on instantly to Mr. Phillips' and give the alarm at home."

"I could not, madam—I could not indeed," said the pitiful creature; to call him man is sure to offer an insult to those that are such. "I'd be dead of fear or ever I got there."

It was even too evident that he spoke truth, and that, should we send him from Cloncallly by main force, he would make no scruple of finding another shelter, rather than risk himself on the open country.

"Saw one ever such a chicken-heart?" said I in anger. "But word must be got to our good friend at Newtown, and that immediate. Will you ride with it, Cargill? and will you set off within the hour?"

"Why, madam," said he, "I would never think twice of it, were it not for leaving you a man the weaker, in case these rumours be truth."

"You may be here again by nightfall, or soon thereafter," said I; but presently began to ponder how he was, so to put it, the captain of my little garrison; I could spare him but grudgingly. "Is there any of the men that may be sent in your stead?" said I to him; "for send on the news we must."

We fell to telling over the men; there was none but had his own post and his own duty, and there were but just enough, all told, to man the house sufficiently. But on the other hand there was no reason to apprehend any attack that day, or the night following. It seemed best upon the whole that Cargill himself should go, and that at once, to be back the sooner; I taking upon myself, during his absence, his duty of oversight.

No sooner was this decided than qualms and tremors began to vex me; of such fickle stuff am I made—hot one moment upon a project, and cold the next. Being left alone, I fell to pacing the room from side to side, and putting it to myself, in what case should I be if harm befell Cargill upon his journey—he that was the best of my men, and his master's trusted servant? A single

horseman upon the road, I saw him in my fancy beset by the rabble of Ultoghs, wild from the hills ; scarce to be controlled by their officers, even were these disposed to protect the wayfarer. The poor groom's fears began to seem less despicable, now that one whose life I valued was about to take his place. But what should hinder him, after all, to take the bridle-path across the hills ? I asked myself this, and was something eased in mind, for it was little likely he should meet them there.

Yet even so, the room grew all too strait for me ; I went forth into the hall, and thence to the door of the court. I looked through the little window of one pane that is beside it. There yet stood the groom's horse as he had been left of his rider ; it was extremely careless of my man Timothy, and I was angered. So good a beast, and not so much as a quarter-cloth thrown over him after such a race. But he was still steaming after it ; it might be there was yet little harm done. "It were nothing less than a charity," I thought, "if some one should ride him quietly home." But Cargill was over-heavy for him.

I tried the door, which was fast locked, and the key gone ; this was one of Cargill's precautions, who was by way of having little confidence in the prudence of the women ; no doubt he had it at that moment in his pocket. I must remember, I thought, to get it from him ere he left the house. But the first thing was to see the good horse cared for, and to that end I must get out of the house into the yard. The front-door, as I had secured it, I could open it ; and so with some little difficulty I did, and went out, closing it after me.

I had made but two steps when I thought I heard a sound at the door I had that moment closed ; I turned and looked at it. It was not the door that had sprung open, that was fast enough ; but in the shallow recess of the little window that is to the left of it, pressed close to the wall to escape observation, there was a little ragged figure that I knew—Gorman O'Cahan. He came forth as soon as he saw himself observed.

"Me lady," said he, "I heard the horse coming, an' I thought I'd stay awhile in case 'twas somebody that might have a word or two to say to meself."

It flashed upon my mind that here was a way out of my perplexity. This child, I thought, would run small risk were he to take my message.

"Gorman," I said, "you have brought a message to me this

morning. Will you take another from me to a friend of mine before you go home?"

"Sure, lady," said the lad earnestly, "it's proud an' happy I'd be to do ye the laste little service in life."

"Can you ride?" I asked him.

"Faith, me lady, I hardly know!" said he. "I can stick on to a garron, anny way."

"That will do, I think," said I, smiling in answer to his smile; for Mr. Phillips' horse was scarce in the mood to quarrel with his rider, and I meant that Gorman should ride him home. "Do you know Colonel Phillips' house at Newtown-Limavady?" I asked him.

"I do not," replied he; "but it'll be a quare place av I can't find it out. I know where Newtown lies, anny way."

I took the lad within doors to be fed while I writ my letter. Cargill was ready for the same; but I explained to him, he marvelling greatly the while, how I had found another messenger. While I was writing, he went to see Mr. Phillips' horse made ready for his journey; I could hear him where I sat rating Timothy for his neglect.

We asked no leave of the cowardly groom, nor, indeed, spoke a word to him about the matter. But in a very few minutes we had set a rider of another temper on his horse's back. On the bridle-path to Newtown there was little fear of his falling in with the Red-shanks, who would certainly keep to the road. And should he be challenged by any not a friend for his possession of so good a beast, which was the one risk he ran, we must even trust that his own good wit would provide him with an answer. The wit of the animal, we knew, might be trusted to find the way which the rider knew not. But with every good hope I could set before my mind, my heart would not be forbid to shrink as I saw horse and rider depart.

I take no shame to confess that I went straight to my chamber, and on my knees besought our Lord to direct them safely; thinking that He who had in old times condescended to guide brute beasts upon their way, so to save His Ark from the hands of the heathen, would pardon a woman in trouble that asked him to do the like once more to save a household from destruction. And that His hand was around my little messenger, I nothing doubt; for though I knew it not till later, he and his steed came safe to their destination.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW THOSE AT CLONCALLY WERE TERRIFIED BY THE CHALLENGE OF A FRIEND.

THOUGH oppress'd in mind at the thought of the toilsome journey undertaken at my instance by one who would accept no reward at my hands ; no, not so much as a single coin—"for," said he, "what account could I give of it if 'twere found upon me?"—yet was I more heartened thereby than cast down. No doubt but it was the merest folly to set store by such trifles ; I thought shame, even at the moment, that they should move me up or down, yet move me they did ; and I that had felt the stirring of the great door-bolt as a promise of escape from threatened peril had sure more reason to look upon the appearance of this friend from the ranks of our foes as a very earnest and assurance of help in time of need. It came into my head an hundred times that day how he had come to mine aid in the very nick of time, and at every remembrance with a fresh lightening of the spirits, so that I found my mind rendered equal to the contemplation of so many and such disquieting messages.

Nor was I left for long time to ponder them by myself alone. 'Twas yet early in the day when I had two visitors, one of them marvelling to find himself unlooked for. Sure, if he was unexpected, he was but the welcomer for that—as welcome as dawn to the wanderer, or cockcrow to him that is haunted by a spectre. Sure, I knew not myself so faint-hearted till I had the arm of a strong man whereon to lean.

That strong man was Mr. Browning, who had ridden out of Derry to bring me notice of the reports that were afoot in the city concerning the massacre planned by the Irish. By the time he

started the city was gone clean mad with fear and rage, so that he knew not what manner of tale would have grown out of the truth by the time it should reach Cloncallly.

His wife rode with him, not enduring her husband to be out of her sight among unknown dangers. 'Twas the first time that ever I met this lady, who hath but lately come to Derry from Greencastle. She seemed older than her husband, but a pleasant woman, and one I was ere long to see much of, though then we knew neither that nor many other things that were presently to befall us.

I took it for no small proof of friendship on her part and her husband's that they should trust themselves upon so lonely a road as that from the Waterside of Derry to Cloncallly, with such a rumour in the air; and so I told them, but Mr. Browning made very light of it.

"Why now," said he, "didn't you hear me promise to Captain Hamilton to have a care of you in his absence, and do you any service that lay in my power? Faith, if 'tis ever to lie in my power at all, it seems like to be betwixt this and Sunday."

That set us a-going, and, to my shame be it spoken, we were presently deep in the subject—the whole wide subject—of the peril wherein we stood, with all of our kinsmen and countrymen, and what were best to be done in these emergencies; and that before ever my guests had sat down, or Mrs. Browning had laid aside her riding-hood. 'Twas one that bore a deal of discussion, however, and was scarce more clear an hour later, when we were seated all together around the fire. Derry, with Lord Antrim's Red-shanks for garrison, seemed but a poor refuge to flee to; to quit Cloncallly for such a shelter was like to be a case of *out of the frying-pan into the fire*. And yet, what could my dozen of men do against such a mob of Irishry as might come against us—as was certain to come against us, if Derry should be so handled as was feared? A black look-out was our brightest, and ever the blacker the more we looked at it.

After much debate, the wisest course appeared to be to remain where we were for the present, until it should be seen how the Regiment of Raps demeaned itself in Derry. This being decided, and likewise another matter that was no small comfort to me—to wit, that Mr. Browning and his wife should remain my guests till Monday—there seemed little else to be done than to eat and drink and make as merry as circumstances would allow. For

now it was drawing towards the four hours; twilight was deepening into nightfall, though scarce as yet to dark.

At Cargill's request, Mr. Browning was gone with him to make the round of the house, and to see that the defences were all in order; there was a distant sound of bolting and slamming that told us that the rest of the men were come within doors for the night. Of a sudden there came about the house a mighty unpleasant noise—the noise of a multitude of men; steps and voices so disorderly as it made me quake to hear them. Presently came a great knocking at the back-door. I ran with Mrs. Browning to an upper window that commands the courtyard. How she felt at that moment I know not. For myself, I take little shame to confess that the blood buzzed in mine ears like the sound of the bees in summer, and my heart beat in my throat as though I were choking. For we nothing doubted but these were the men that had it in charge to take our lives, and that it was upon that very business they were come.

The knocking upon the door was repeated; then a loud voice commanded "Silence!" in a tone of anger. At that the hubbub a little quieted; but still the air was alive with a rustling, as of men that crowd together and speak in whispers. At that moment, and as I tried to hold my breath to listen the better, there came from the nursery the joyous cry of "Mother! mother!"

'Twas the hour of the day when Roland is always brought to me. Sure, any woman may think out of her own heart with what a pain I took my son in mine arms the next moment, not knowing but it was the last time I should ever hold him there.

By the time I had stilled his prattle, and was able to listen once more to what was going on below me in the court, it was come to a parley. Of that so little could be heard where I stood that I ran downstairs as speedily as I might, taking my son in mine arms. My guest I clean forgot in my great fear, but she followed without a bidding, and we came to the door together.

Here was Cargill, with musket loaded and levelled, at the little opened window, speaking to one without. Mr. Browning was at his elbow, listening to every word.

The voice of him they spoke with had nothing of bluster or arrogance, being a kind of beggarly whine. Before ever I heard a word I knew from the cozening tone that 'twas a favour he was asking. Faith! the singing in mine ears and hammering in my pulses abated upon the instant. Yet I remembered that Gorman's

words had glanced at some pretext of mendicancy or sudden sickness, to gain an entrance within our premises, and drew near the window in a frame of mind as little charitable as ever I felt in my life.

The spokesman, whoever he might be, of the crowd in the yard had doubtless been making some claim of old acquaintance with Cargill, who, for his part, was denying the same without any scruple.

"Never crossed words with you before in my life!" were the first words I heard, to which there was some soft-voiced blarneying answer, whereof I heard no word. "Sold me a horse, did you?" said Cargill quickly. "I remember ye now. A wretched beast as ever I backed! You cheated me most abominably; and I believe 'twas a stolen horse at that. I'd like to know what I owe you for that, unless 'tis a hiding."

Again I lost the answer; so I came closer to the window, pressing my child's cheek to my neck to keep him quiet.

"How many are there with you?" asked Cargill sharply.

"Two score, maybe," said the voice without, a true Irish voice, the keynote thereof the desire to curry favour. "There or thereabouts: maybe a man or two more."

"Here's a modest asking!" said Cargill. "Supper and lodging for two score men, or more, and all on the strength of having cheated me with a horse two years ago. No, indeed, my man. Begone to Derry, where you're entitled to room and rations."

"Troth!" said the other, something less smoothly, "had we gotten what was our rights in Derry, 'tis not ourselves would have troubled you to-night."

At that we all pressed nigher to the window, so that Cargill's musket was pushed through it.

"Ach! Kape that to yourself, will you?" said the man in his natural tone, startled out of his artificial cringing by the sight of it.

And at that, though my first thought was how little need there was to fear one whom the mere sight of a musket so daunted, yet my second was that cowards be ever the cruellest foes, once they know themselves to have the mastery.

"What do you mean?" questioned Cargill. "Are there over-many of you for your quarters, or what's the matter?"

A sort of inarticulate growl forced itself from the man, in his own despite.

"What is it I mane, is it you're askin'?" said he. "Ach, thin, 'tis the outside of the gate they've had the face to show his Majesty's troops—no less. Bad luck to them! The divvle fly away wid them for an unmannerly pack, as they are!"

"Nay, but what do you mean, after all?" exclaimed Cargill. "Have they turned you out of the city?"

"Tur-rned us out?" answered the man angrily—"tur-rned us out, is it? No, begorra! there's not the men in their skins that would have done that same. No, bedad! but it's *kept* us out they've done, bad cess to thim! Shut the gates in our very faces, bedad! without so much as a 'by your lave' to us. Tur-rned us out, did ye say? No, but they had no more manners than to send us packing from the gates as if 'twas a pack of thieves they took us for; and promised to tur-rn wan of the great guns upon us, bedad! if we made not the better speed out av their sight!"

"Oh, brave hearts!" said Mr. Browning, turning towards us with sparkling eyes. "Oh, how well have they deserved of their country this day!"

"Fegs! ye may well say that," said a voice behind us.

And, turning, sure enough there was a perfect concourse at our backs—Margery and Annot Wilson, the white-visaged groom peering forth from the kitchen with starting eyes, and Rabbie Wilson, who had spoken. His post was at the window of the dining-room, which he had forsaken to listen to the parley. Faith, it needed but one scowl from Cargill to send him skurrying back to it quicker than he had left it.

Outside the window, the leader's account of the treatment they had received at Derry gate had raised a perfect tumult of murmuring and of imprecations, so that he could neither make himself heard of us nor of them. At last he fell to cursing them roundly.

"And how," said he, "do you think I'll persuade them to let us have shelter and food to put in our empty bellies if you frighten them with such a hellish noise?"

At that Cargill made as though he fell into a passion of laughter.

"Fair and softly, Master Captain!" he called out—"fair and softly, sir, with your frightening. I would have you to know that we be men enough here to laugh at your beggarly two score of recruits. But what token have you to give us that 'tis the truth you're telling us, and no lie? And where be the rest of the regiment? You be ten times two score, I warrant, all told. Are the rest of them in Derry, or wandering men like yourselves?"

"Divvle a man of thim's in Derry, anny way," replied the man whom Cargill had addressed by the style of "captain," and, indeed, he had so professed himself before we came to the window. We afterwards found that he actually held this rank in the Red-shank regiment. Heavens! what a creature to hold a king's commission—one that had been the seller of horses to grooms and such-like people, and, as Cargill informed us, shrewdly suspected of horse-stealing to boot!

Between hunger and fatigue he was finely cowed by the time we had to do with him, and fell to protesting by all the saints he could call to mind that he had told us nothing but the simple truth. I had bethought me more than once or twice, while he was speaking, of the store of ready-dressed victual I had in the house; and at this point, hearing that the Irish captain was gone from protesting to imploring, I beckoned to Mr. Browning to follow me into the dining-room, meaning to tell him what I had done, and to hear his mind upon the matter, though, truly, had it been other than mine own, I doubt I had gone counter to it. For the men, if what their leader said was true, must be nigh to desperate with hunger. What could be looked for from such but violence of all kinds? Or what else should we deserve at their hands should we refuse relief to their necessity?

I told him in a very words of the store of victual I had by me. He, on his part, was scarce longer in bestowing upon me the counsel I had asked. One or two shrewd questions put to Cargill, anent the tale of the precious Red-shank captain, convinced him that there was little reason to doubt the same. To be sure, 'twas a better thing than we could have hoped to hear; 'tis ever easy to credit that which we desire in our hearts.

"And where would you feed them?" he asked of me next.

"In the great barn," I answered. "There is room enough for twice as many as two score; 'twere no great task, neither, to set the provisions there ready for them. And they might sleep there afterward; there is plenty of straw; it were better lying, at least, than under the hedges. And into the house will I let none of them."

"No, truly," said he, with a smile. "I was something afraid lest your charity should propose to let them come within the doors to sup."

"And after that," said I, "you need not put your advice in words that shall be any plainer. 'Tis clear you are of one mind

with me, and mean that the hungry shall be fed, be they never such scoundrels."

At that both he and his wife fell a-smiling: I smiled too, for very lightness of heart.

"Let us keep them waiting no longer than can be helped," said he. "Where is the larder?"

Where was the larder indeed? Where, but at the further side of the courtyard? All these hungry, undisciplined ruffians were between the house and it. 'Tis a very ill position for a larder; and so for the first time I perceived, while I was telling the same to Mr. Browning.

"But surely," said he, "you keep not your store of provisions so far from your kitchen?"

"Faith, but we do," said I.

"'Tis an error, and a great one," said he. "Not a deadly one, in this instance, since the men are already cowed, and are but scantily armed. But were they the bitter mob of fanatics we had reason to look for, in what case had you been a day or two hence? 'Tis an error you will never fall into again, I dare warrant you."

And with that he began to give such orders to Cargill as blanched my cheek once more, and his wife's as well. Yet we stood silent beside him, both the one and the other; when this man issued an order there was none that dared open his mouth to protest against it. Cargill received them with a bow, and went forthwith to gather the men, each from the window he guarded. Then Mr. Browning turned to me, with a grave face indeed.

"Dare you, madam," asked he, "be left in the house alone with your women while we men divide their portions to the Irish?"

"Dare I? Oh, yes," said I. "If your wife hath no fear, no more have I. But surely there is no need for you to leave us?"

"Why," said he, "that we'll see presently. How many men are we, all told—twenty?"

"Fourteen," said I. "And of these one is an arrant coward; he must be left within doors. He would do nothing among the Irishmen but to weep and quake. They would be put in heart to fall upon us should they once see him."

"Thirteen, then," said he—"thirteen, counting myself? Yes. Then, madam, we are not a man too many for the work; there's no saying what a mob of starving men may do once they

see food within their reach for the snatching. No, we must be enough to keep them in check; so many to carve, and so many to guard the carvers."

"Yes," said I, "but *are* you enough to hold so great a number in check? I doubt it. Were it not better to deliver the key of the larder to that captain of theirs, and let them use my provision as they list? What is the victual—what is all that is in Cloncallly—compared to a single life?"

"There were no surer course," said he, "to start them a-marauding. Bethink you, madam, that there is as much danger—ay, more; ten times more—in any seeming fearfulness as in any boldness when dealing with a rabble. Ay, in such a case foolhardiness is your true caution; I am sure of it. Nay, madam, be not so cast down." I was so, and cared not to disguise it. "We run into little danger; the men intend no violence. We be well armed to boot, and they neither have proper weapons nor are skilled to use them if they had."

And here Roland, who had looked with wondering eyes from one to another all this time and held his tongue—stilled by the pressure of my hand—lifted up his small sweet voice, and bade me never fear.

"*Me* will go wis ze rest of ze men," said he, putting his hand in Mr. Browning's, who lifted him up and kissed him.

"You will stay in the house and take care of mammy and the other lady," said he—a charge which Roland proudly accepted.

Here Cargill returned to the room to tell us that the men were now all assembled.

"Time too," said the old soldier, briskly. "They in the yard are growing clamorous. But what," said he next moment, "if another band of these masterless men should find their way to Cloncallly, perhaps to the front of the house? Madam cannot be left to parley with them by herself."

'Twas a new fear, and none could call it an unfounded one.

"I have it," said I. We were now in the hall, where were Captain Hamilton's weapons hanging on the wall, his hunting-gear as well. I took a horn from its place. "I can wind this," said I, "well enough. Should we have need of a man's help I will blow it, one blast; should we need you all, thrice in quick succession."

"A good signal, and well thought of," said Mr. Browning. "One blast, then, for one man; three, if we be all required."

And then, with scarce a gesture of leave-taking, he fell to marshalling the men, each in his place. Then came Annot Wilson forth from the kitchen, bringing the cressets ready kindled ; they had not been hung up in the courtyard by the time the Irishmen beset the house. The men took them whose duty it was to tend them every night.

Next there was a short parley at the window, Mr. Browning being himself the spokesman on our behalf ; he stipulated that all the men of the party should pile their arms in a corner of the yard, to which they made no objection, understanding it to be the condition of their receiving a meal of meat. And then Annot Wilson (that is as calm in time of danger as any man ever I saw in my life) began to undo the bolts of the courtyard door ; she held it, once 'twas set wide, while the brave men filed out by twos ; those going first that had the cressets. Mr. Browning went last by himself, bearing his drawn sword in his hand ; he turned him upon the threshold, with a little gesture of farewell ; and so was gone out of our sight.

When the noise of the drawing of bolts and turning of keys was over, the courtyard was almost silent, save for a little sound of trampling and calling at the further side, where were the barn and the larder. But it was nothing to alarm the faintest of heart. But just as we were leaving the passage, thinking that all was now in order in the court, Timothy, the groom, called without and asked leave to put the great mastiff Nero into the house ; he so tugged at his chain and growled, it seemed, that they were put in fear lest he should break it ; then, should he fall upon the strangers, it might provoke bad blood and a riot difficult to quell.

It had truly been a day of sudden alarms—from dawn to dusk one unlooked-for thing had come so fast on the back of another that I suppose I was become hardened ; for sure and certain it is that now a feeling of confidence took possession of me, and spread from me to my guest and my women ; as if the worst had come that was like to come, and was none so awful, when all was said. Mrs. Browning was able to smile at me again, though the situation of her husband was one that would have daunted many a woman. Presently she came with me into the nursery, where, between us, we put Roland to bed, Margery being occupied below, with Annot, in preparing the supper and the table. In truth, my worst unhappiness at that moment was to think that neither of my guests had tasted bite or sup since they were come into the house. It

was now not to be mended, however, save by hastening the supper, which was a-doing.

Scarce was Roland's head upon his pillow, when his eyes were closed—so great a thing it is to be a child, and have no comprehension of peril. We came then below to the dining-room. We had left the great mastiff snuffing about in every corner. By this time he had completed his search, and was laid down at length just within the door of the dining-room. When we came into that room, and sat down to wait for Mr. Browning's return, he changed his place to the side of the chair I took. He seemed restless. I put my hand upon his neck to quiet him, and it did, for soon he dropped his nose upon his paws, and appeared to fall asleep, like Roland.

We were fallen into a musing silence, listening, I believe, for the incoming of the men, when suddenly my dog lifts his nose into the air with a low growl—it had been a bark the next moment, save that I dropped my hand again upon his neck, stilling him. But he kept his attitude of listening, and we fell into the same; but that which was perceived by the finer sense of the brute was blank silence to us. In another minute he sprang to his feet, I still checking him; then in the hush of the empty house came a distant clatter of dishes and murmur of the women's voices in the kitchen. But it was not that which had aroused my dog; and that there was something was, alas! only too evident, for his hair was all a-bristle on his back, and for all my soothing he would not stop his low rumbling growl, which is a sound to give pause to any that hears it.

In another moment we could hear distinctly steps upon the path; steps of but one or two persons, methought, but stealthy, and therefore fearful. Sure, in that moment I felt as never before the passion of the words of Agag to Samuel, "Surely the bitterness of death is past?" But one minute ago so confident, and now plunged back again into worse fear than ever; 'twas bitter to bear! We rose with one consent, and slipped out of the room. I went close to the great door, to listen if I might hear aught to guide me. Mrs. Browning, with the heart of a soldier, went to tell the women that they must leave their women's duty, and become men for the nonce.

We had not spoken a single word to each other, acting in concert by a like impulse; but yet the men without must have heard some sound to render them the carefuller, for all again was silence

as I listened at the door. Then came the very slightest, softest rubbing against the little window beside it, wherefrom one may challenge a stranger in troubled times. A kind of horror fell upon me, to think that some one was trying to peer through it into the lighted hall. It was shuttered fast, but there be chinks in the shutter, and a hole as well for the gun. The dog was at my knee; I could feel him trembling with eagerness, but he was bid to silence, and obeyed, uttering no sound at all. Then Mrs. Browning came back into the hall; she took the hunting-horn from its place as she passed, and brought it to me. Annot Wilson and Margery followed her from the kitchen, and the poor trembling groom followed them for sheer desire of company.

It had occurred to me before that 'twere well to challenge the intruders, "Friend or foe?" before recalling my men from their task; but I had dismissed the thought upon a moment's consideration, since to utter a challenge in a woman's voice were but to provoke violence. But the moment this groom came in my sight, I determined he should do me that office, since he could do naught else. The stand of arms was ready to my hand. I took therefrom a musket and clapped it into his shaking hand; then I ordered him to unshutter the loophole, level the musket, and question the new-comers. He was nigh to dropping the musket in his terror. He was opening the fool mouth of him to beseech and protest, but I put a speedy end to that. I snatched a loaded pistol from the stand, and clapt it to his ear.

"If you do not as I order you this instant," said I in a very fierce whisper, "may God have mercy on your soul, for I'll blow your brains out!"

Later, when the terror was past, I scarce could forgive myself for so harsh a threat; but at the moment it steadied my trembler, and I had no sooner seen the effect of it than I gave him another dose. For as he began with trembling hands to unshutter the loophole, "Take you a good full breath," I told him, "and speak out boldly; for if you falter, your last moment has come!"

At this moment Mrs. Browning touched my arm, and pointed to the mastiff, that was behaving very strangely. The bristling of his coat has ceased, and he was snuffing at the door with a quivering ear and tail. A wild thought flashed through my mind as I saw it, to be dismissed as quick. There be many Irish coming and going at Clonccally from the village. It might well be that the dog should know the new-somer, and yet he be no friend;

yet that and my pistol together put some heart into the groom. He threw open the loophole with a firmer hand than I could have believed, stuck the musket through it, and asked in something like a man's voice, Who was there? Friend or foe?

But ah! can any that shall read this picture to himself what was my feeling when I heard the answer? 'Twas in the voice that I know best in all the world, and love best, but not a note of hope was in it.

"Ah, Canning, what did I tell you?" said he.

With that the barrel of the musket was seized and dragged as quick as thought from the nerveless hands that held it.

"Ah, you scoundrels!" shouted he in such a tone of grief and rage as I hope never to hear again. "Open the door, will ye, and answer me what you've done with my wife and child."

Faith! the first word was scarce out of his mouth ere I was dragging at the bolts and chains, the women helping me, and the dog hindering with his eagerness. Before Captain Hamilton could comprehend the situation, I was hanging upon his neck, laughing, crying, hugging him, thanking God—Margery and Annot well-nigh as distraught as I with very joy. And so our greatest fear was turned into a happiness that for a little time was near as hard to bear.

Then what a questioning and answering, and what confusion in the same! None of us fit to answer for the desire to ask, nor able to put a clear question for our eagerness to make explanations. Scarce can I marvel to think of it, neither; sure, a cup can be filled no fuller than to the brim, and my mind and heart were even like to overflow with this great mercy of my husband's happy return; at the very moment—oh, the very moment!—when, had a wish been granted me, the prayer of my soul had been for his presence.

Dear! every other thought was driven clean out of my head; I took none to greet his companion (Mr. Canning of Garvagh), nor yet to make him known to Mrs. Browning, whom he had never met till then. It was she who a little recalled me to composure; for, seeing that Mr. Phillips' groom so handled the musket that 'twas become a danger to all of us, she very coolly took it from him, and put it in its place upon the stand. Whereat I was put in remembrance of my pistol, that in my sudden madness of joy I had cast down, loaded as it was, upon the settle; and from

the thought of that sprang up the thought of the rest I was neglecting.

If ever there was happiness upon this earth, 'twas round our supper-table this night ; and with happiness came even mirth and gaiety, so great was the rebound of our spirits from despair and gloom. 'Twas like the sudden breaking-forth of the sun when the heavens had threatened a tempest. Yet, sure, the gloom of the thunder-clouds was scarce abated ; scarce, for aught we knew, was the bursting of the storm delayed. The barn was full of men that we knew for unfriends to every soul of our race, and that had been furnished, by the treachery of them that should have been our protectors, with both equipment and opportunity to show their enmity in the deadliest way. But yet they were not in Derry ; that was some comfort. Opportunity, at least, had been snatched from their grasp, and that, had we known it at the moment, by the gallantry and promptitude of a very few and inconsiderable persons. Yet the treachery remained, and was not to be denied ; and what harm that treachery might work us yet, sure, thought could hardly fathom. Nay, had we known the straits it was to bring us to, there had been little merry-making in our heads that night, for all the mercy we had experienced. Perhaps the choicest mercy of all was this, that the future was covered from our eyes, in such sort that a respite was possible from the wearing anxiety which yet beset our pillows ready to lay hold of us once more at the breaking of the day.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW A PARTY RID OUT OF CLONCALLY AND RID STRAIGHT BACK AGAIN.

SURE and indeed, carefulness beset our pillows at our wakening, as how could it miss when danger threatened us on every side? That which was the nearest was doubtless the presence of the two score men that lay in the barn; it was like to be no easy matter to be clean rid of them. For themselves, we were more than a match for them, there being now fifteen men within the house, or better than one to three—ours well armed and skilful of their weapons, they provided with but poor makeshifts, and little disciplined even in the use of these. But, then, they had a regiment at their back. It were a pretty pickle should they bring the whole hive of bees about our ears.

Captain Hamilton's first waking words were of this very thing.

"Upon my word, Mary," said he, "I could go nigh to wishing that your charity had been with my peace of mind last night, and that was far enough to seek. It begins to have a plaguy look of blundering, this of showing the thieves the road to the larder."

It had, and not a word had I to say to the contrary. But afterwards, when the same matter came up in talk at the table, there was no lack of champions, each of my guests vying with the rest in finding good reason and sufficient for all that I had done.

"Why, man!" Mr. Browning exclaimed—to be sure, he had been mine abettor before the fact—"why, Hamilton! what would you have? The choosing was no better than between two evils. One would think you knew not the boldness of an empty stomach. Faith! I do; and I was glad enough to hear of meat to pacify

the mob that was at the door last night between five and six of the clock."

Mr. Canning had likewise his word to say.

"Sure, Hamilton, it's neither you nor I that should find fault," said he; "for had they been wandering at large all about your policies, it strikes me we'd have had some difficulty in getting into the house at all, let alone unobserved, as we did. It's *ill quarrelling with the horse that sets you across the river*, as the saying hath it."

"I'm none so sure of that," said Captain Hamilton, "if the beast shows an inclination to buck you off in the middle. I'm not finding fault, my dear friends—far from it, I assure you; but if my wife herself will deny that it hath more the marks of a woman's pity than of a man's judgment, she's not the woman I take her for!"

* "And so it was, past all controversy, more credit to her!" exclaimed Mr. Browning. "But that it averted a great danger is every whit as evident."

"Like enough indeed," said my husband, "for the moment. The difficulty now is to be rid of them entirely, and that's like to be a pretty tough riddle, I'm afraid. If any of you hath a glimpse of the answer, I'll be thankful to him to declare it; for my part, I'm lost in the deepest darkness."

"I see little mystery," said Mr. Browning, "in facing them with the plain truth—to wit, that having cleared the larder here for their supper, they must go further afield to find their breakfast. And I'd have as little hesitancy in ordering them off the premises, or in kicking them off, if they loiter. What say you, Mr. Canning?"

"What! would you take up arms against the King's men?" asked my husband. "There might be awkward consequences to follow that, Browning, as I know to my cost."

"Not arms, but legs!" said Mr. Browning. "And that reminds me that you'll have to suffer me to try it, at any rate; you can't go within sight of them, Hamilton, proclaimed as you are——"

"Oh, but won't I, though!" broke in my husband; "faith, it's see the men that have ousted Mountjoy's I'll do, and that before the sun's an hour higher. A set of idle good-for-naughts! not one of them stirring yet, I believe, and eight of the clock gone ten minutes ago."

But at this we all fell to expostulating with one accord ; for every word he could say in favour of his intention, we had ten, and more, to say against it. Indeed, it was flat madness for a man that had a price on his head to show himself to a King's regiment ; and to do it without the least necessity in the world were no longer madness, merely, but crime. So Mr. Canning and Mr. Browning told him roundly ; we women bringing persuasion to bear, while they tried the power of a rating. At last, not finding a word to say in answer to what we had to urge, he could not choose but to give way ; sure, never a man did the same with a worse grace since the beginning of thwarting.

Truly, it seemed as circumstance were bent on justifying every word Mr. Browning had said, that morning ; for in the first place, our men being marched under arms to the barn-door, the Irishmen made no more resistance than dust to the broom ; nay, they showed even some alacrity to be gone. Further, being arrived at the outermost gate, and our men being halted, the leader (for it goes against the grain with me to call so scurvy a creature captain) turned back and craved a word apart with Mr. Browning. One may doubt if there be honour, but of a surety there is gratitude even in the breast of a thief.

"Sir," said he, "I'd fain make some return for your entertainment ; and so I warn ye that as soon as the Earl comes to the front, information will be laid of you being in your own house. There was a talk last night of laying hold of you ourselves, but some of us were against it, and the rest judged themselves not strong enough to face your servants. But take my advice now, and get you gone to some hiding-place before your retreat is cut off ; if ye can, even now, for the country's full of bands of Antrim's."

Mr. Browning stared at him blankly ; presently he burst out laughing.

"If I don't believe he takes me for Captain Hamilton," said he, "may I be whipt ! Why, my good man, I am none of him, but one that is his friend, sure enough—ask this man my name."

"Captain Browning," said Cargill, at once, "of the ship *Mountjoy*."

"Ods nails !" said the other ; "and so you may be, an it like you ; and so I have my pains for my thanks !"

And at that he turned his back on them, and left them, looking pernicious sour.

Mr. Browning lost no time in conveying this caution to the ears it was meant for, as soon as he was returned to the house ; it gave some colour of likelihood—even overmuch—to his fear that we might be beset, later in the day, by a larger force. But as to flying, while yet there was time, Captain Hamilton scouted the thought.

"Here I am," said he, "and here I bide ; let him that can lay his hand on me possess his fortune !"

Nor could we move him from this resolve.

"No," said he. "Had it not been for the trusty friendship of yourself and your wife, Browning, mine had been left alone to face as ugly an adventure as could happen to any lady. I conceive it more my duty, now that dirty times are threatening, to look to the welfare of my household than to take care of mine own worthless skin."

Mr. Canning added his persuasion to ours, without effect. Captain Hamilton had in this matter a ready answer to everything that could be brought up to turn him to our way of thinking.

"And you shall understand," said he at last, "that I count it far less dangerous to stay here than to fly across the country, so infested as they say it is—and I believe it—with marauding bands of Ultoghs. I shall be well disguised, never fear ; and do you think there's one among the men that would betray me ? Ask Cargill."

"Well, and that's true enough," said I ; "but there's that groom of Mr. Phillips', can any one answer for him, do ye think ; or for any other dastard ?"

"Very likely not," said Captain Hamilton coolly. "But we can take a hint from what you did last night, and try what the fear of a pistol will be like for a gag to him. Oh ! never you fear, my friends. I know too well the value of my life to *risk it*, riding abroad in so unsettled a time. But truly," said he mightily seriously, a minute after, "I much fear that it will be needful that you ladies should face that same danger. 'Twere more to my mind than a present of a thousand pound, if one would set you both down in the Diamond of Derry this minute."

"What !" said I, with indignation, "and leave you here at Cloncalla ? Sure, if 'tis a thing disgraceful and cowardly for you, 'tis nothing better for me, and you shall not ask it of me if you love me."

Dear ! but there was a fine storm of talk round mine ears the

next minute, nor could I so much as pretend to shut them to what was said. They fell to describing how Clonccally might straightway be surrounded by hordes of wild Ultoghs from the hills, bent on slaughter; how Derry at least was safe, being forewarned; and how, the women and children being out of danger, the hands of the men were set free from much hindrance, both in defence and in sally. They were all in one story, and Mrs. Browning joined them.

"What would you have given," said she, "to know that your son Roland was in perfect safety last night? The thought of my grandchild Mary was a very tower of strength to me, I can tell you."

"And yet," said I, "you so ill endured the thought of your husband in peril that you came forth out of the same safety to be by his side."

The tears that come to me so seldom stood in mine eyes from pure vexation; 'twas my turn now to chafe at the friendship that urged me—for mine own good—to do a thing so distasteful to me. But of what use was chafing when Captain Hamilton had made up his mind? As well may the taken fish chafe against the net. He went to and fro, hastening the preparations for our departure.

"Nay, nay," said he, when I desired time to make some necessary arrangements, as I thought them; "you are even too long here already. Hasten—hasten, if you have any care for my peace of mind."

And so had us all presently on horseback, and on the road to Derry, each behind an armed man (himself was my groom, dressed in a suit of his own livery), and with two others in front of the party, and two behind, as our escort.

We had ridden but a little way—not a mile, nor anything like it—when we overtook a party of loiterers, no doubt belonging to the party that had lain overnight in our own barn; they eyed us in a mighty unfriendly manner. To be sure, they were scarce likely to know the party for some of their entertainers, never having seen any of the women, nor any of the gentlemen save Mr. Browning. Moreover, we rode fast, and passed them at a trot.

Ever the further we went, the more of the Rapparees we fell in with. As we drew near to the Waterside, the road was alive with them. 'Twas a plain impossibility to get at the ferry, which we judged must be in their own hands. Whether it was so or no, it

was clear that both ferry and ferrymen must be altogether in their power, and in such a case to attempt the crossing would have been but to offer them a prey.

There was no need for a council among our defenders, as, indeed, there was no time.

"Back again!" said Captain Hamilton, Mr. Browning, and Mr. Canning with one accord.

They turned their horses as smartly as if they had been drilled to it, and we took the homeward road at the same pace we kept in going—to wit, a trot that was smart enough for business, but had no appearance of flight.

Yet the mere fact of retreat doth bring the mind into a state of apprehension, and it seemed to me that these very men who had permitted us to pass unmolested on our way towards the city seemed now as they had fain stopped us had they had but the time to make up their minds. Whether the others observed the same or no, I cannot say; they kept on at the same even trot, passing the bands of the Red-shank soldiers without so much as a glance at them over the shoulder.

They might be minded to stop us, but to attempt it was beyond their courage (we riding so compact), till we came to the stretch of level road that lies about half a mile from Cloncalla gate. Here were a goodly number of the Ultoghs, scattered in parties of threes and fours; they saw our band while it was yet at some distance, and ran together with one consent. This was a motion that, in such circumstances, carried a threat. Captain Hamilton held up his hand for a halt; he had assumed the command of the party, little as command accorded with his disguise.

"Will they attempt to stop us, think you?" said he.

"Devil a doubt of it," said Mr. Canning, dropping into his fighting manners. "It's yourself they're after, too; they're aware of the reward that's set upon you."

"But they're not acquaint with your person," said Mr. Browning, "and in that dress they need never suspect you."

"Very good," said Captain Hamilton; "then the less is the risk of the plan I offer." And so explained it to them in a very few words, there being not a moment to lose. As it always is with him, it was the post of danger he claimed, nor would he be said "Nay" to. Neither was there time for discussion, for who knew but more of the Ultoghs might draw together to strengthen those that stood already in two close ranks across the road? I was

very speedily helped from my pillion, and remounted behind Timothy the groom; Roland in my lap, for I feared lest the gallop might shake the child from his seat in front of the saddle. Captain Hamilton and Mr. Canning then rid forward with one of the armed servants; we followed as close as we could in two rows of three, the outermost men of the hinder rank being the armed servants that at first had been our rear-guard.

"Ready?" said my husband, turning in his stirrups. "Then follow me, and do as I do; remember that 'twill be well if we can avoid harming these scullogues that have the King's commission among them."

At that he set forward at a gentle trot, the rest keeping pace and place. Being come to within an hundred yards of the Irishmen, he stands up in his stirrups once more.

"Now," says he. And we all dashed forward at a charging pace. But being come to within twenty paces of the foe, for so undoubtedly they were, suddenly he swerved to the left, where the ground was sound and the galloping safe. The Irish, who are as quick as the light in their wits, were after us in an instant to head us off; but they stood at a disadvantage, being across the road, and there were no more than a dozen that had the least chance of throwing themselves in our way. Of these, not one man dared to stand his ground when they came nigh to the naked swords, but quailed and stood aside; so raw and undisciplined were the men that were thought fit to take the place of Mountjoy's veterans. Sure, had there been but one man among them with the soldier's gift, he had shown them how to choose ground for their stand against us where it was less easy to evade them.

By the time we were nearing the broken ground that lies just around Cloncall, those that pursued us (for there were some that had the wit to try to head us off by the road, seeing that we must make a circuit to regain it) were left far behind. But there was little time to lose, for all that. We rid into the courtyard nigh as far spent as Mr. Phillips' groom the morning before: 'twas a fortunate thing for us that every man of our little force was made of other stuff than he. They needed scarce a word of command, but had the gate of the courtyard shut before a man of our pursuers was in sight round the corner; the front of the house was done ere we came within doors, Cargill having taken fright at the sound of our over-speedy approach.

Mrs. Browning and I stood with the child and the maids, just

within the house. Mine ears were on the stretch for the clamour of our pursuers at the gate. The men were busying themselves with the horses, gentle as well as simple lending a hand to put them into the stable out of the way. Suddenly there was a kind of cry from Captain Hamilton:

"Dear God!" said he, "there's one of us missing. Who is it?"

"'Tis Captain Browning, sir, an it like you," said Timothy the groom, raising himself from beside a horse he was ungirthing. "He turned about and rid back through the gate as soon as ever he had dismounted his lady."

"And you said nothing to me, sirrah!" said my husband, his eyes flashing.

"Nay, sir, how was it my duty?" said Timothy. "Sure, I knew not but you marked him."

Captain Hamilton turned from him to Mrs. Browning for an explanation, his face as pale as the dead. She was nigh as white as he, but perfectly collected.

"I would beg you to take it with composure, sir," said she. "'Tis a plan my husband hath thought of. I hope it may turn to good."

Briefly, the plan was this: Mr. Browning knew that it was he that was thought to be Captain Hamilton. He knew also that 'twas for the sake of the reward set upon his apprehension that the soldiers sought to take that gentleman; needs must he, therefore, be brought before the Earl of Antrim, their Colonel. Now, Mr. Browning was known by sight to my lord, as, indeed, was Captain Hamilton also. His plan was to avert from us the danger of an attack by suffering the soldiers to take him without more ado. Captain Hamilton was for riding forth at once, and giving himself up.

"Open the gates, there!" shouted he to the men; and was a-buckling of his girths again, when Mr. Canning caught him by the arm. I also laid hold of him. Mrs. Browning stood by him.

"Hear reason, Hamilton," said Mr. Canning. "Of what use were it that you should throw away your liberty—perhaps your life?"

"Sir!" exclaimed my husband, in a flame, "do you think I'd allow another man to stand in my danger? Never, sir! You should answer me for the base, unworthy thought, had I the time to demand satisfaction."

"Nay, do but listen to me, sir," besought Mrs. Browning, at his elbow. "'Tis a small danger Mr. Browning runs—scarce to be reckoned; my lord the Earl knows him; he will be set at liberty as soon as he is seen. For you it were nothing short of death. Nay, sir; if you think, as you said this morning, that we have shown you any friendship in this matter, do not refuse us this favour. Be ruled, and stay in your own house until you shall know that your surrendering yourself shall serve some good purpose."

"Mary," said my husband, "speak you for me; you would not have me disgraced."

But Mrs. Browning took him by the hand.

"I ask it as an especial favour," said she. "'Tis my husband's scheme; do not balk it, I pray you."

'Twas a bitter pill to Captain Hamilton.

"Madam," said he, "I dare not refuse you. Sure, you know not what you have asked of me." And so fell mighty sadly to grooming of his horse.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW LORD ANTRIM HIMSELF AND HIS STAFF CAME TO CLONCALLY.

TO myself, though I was sorry for my husband's grief, and anxious to boot on behalf of his friend, 'twas like coming within a very haven of refuge to return within the walls of mine own house. It had been so sorely against my will that I had left it, two hours ago. My household of two, Annot Wilson and Margery, were entirely of the same mind and fell to their work with a far better will than they had left it, beginning at once to prepare fresh victual, whereof there was a notable lack in the larder.

So passed the day, and after it the night, without the least molestation or any circumstance to revive our fear. Captain Hamilton chafed mightily; but, Lord! what use was in chafing? For my own part, peace seemed to settle down on my heart, so that I found myself going about the house with a snatch of song upon my lips.

Alas! the time for peace and for singing was yet far off in the future; and so, before the sun was high next morning, I was harshly reminded.

For going with my son into his nursery (I being now, by force of circumstances, become his nurse), I stepped to the window to look out. Sure, I know not what I thought to see; but that window looks upon the courtyard, and gives likewise, in the distance, the prospect of a part of the road to Derry. The courtyard below me was silent and empty; but when I looked towards the city, the road was thronged with a crowd of men that were making towards Cloncallly.

Here was a portent that I knew not how to interpret. I ran to tell, first Mrs. Browning (for it did pass through my mind that perhaps, discovering who her husband really was, this mob was escorting him back to Clonccally), and then Mr. Canning and Captain Hamilton. But by the time they were come to the window, the press was gone out of sight in the hollows ; only a few stragglers were scattered here and there upon the road. James and Mr. Canning scanned them curiously.

"They be fugitives, I fear," said Captain Hamilton.

"Manifest fugitives," said Mr. Canning. "You can plainly see it in their gait, even at this distance.

"Then God have mercy upon Derry," said Captain Hamilton, "for I fear 'tis in an evil case !"

Whereat Mrs. Browning, at his elbow, groaned aloud in the bitterness of her heart.

"But there are some that have escaped, as we see," said he, trying to offer her some small crumb of comfort. "We can shelter the poor souls here, God be praised ! though it be," he added in a lower voice, "but till our own turn come."

And so was turning from the window to bid throw open the courtyard gates to the flying crowd, whom we nothing doubted to be the poor people that had fled from the massacre. But Mr. Canning counselled caution.

"Sure," said he, "where's the hurry ? Wait until you see them closer. There's not a man of the pursuers in sight yet. Besides——"

And there he stopped, not saying what was "besides" ; only he peered over the hollows as though he would fain draw up a sight of the fugitives to the tops of the trees.

His eyesight, methinks, must have been marvellous clear, and that same clear eyesight was our salvation, no less. For presently, when some of the foremost came stumbling into view, here were no sober citizens, terrified out of their grave wits, but Antrim's Red-shanks, back again upon our hands, coming the same way they had gone, but at a mighty different rate. Spite of their flagging gait, they carried all the marks of desperate men in their savage, terror-stricken visages, and hustling, stumbling flight. 'Twas as if they ran in fetters, and heard the lash of their pursuers whistling over their heads ; and though the fetters were nought but weariness and fear, yet they seemed to lie as heavy on their limbs as any chain.

The foremost passed the turning of the road in their blind terror, but some that followed took it; then both those that had been before them, and those that came after, crowded behind them into the narrower road, like the meeting waters of two rivers in flood. 'Twas a fearsome sight, and worse instead of better the closer they came.

Those that were close in front of the house were out of sight from the window where we stood; but it needed not the view of them to cramp my heart with fear. Their clamour was so savage that 'twas shocking. 'Twas not their shouts, which were scarce more than a hoarse murmur, their breath was so spent; but though they scarce could stand, they beat upon the great gate of the court with a most terrible passion, as men that would tear it from its posts before it should shut them from the safety they thought to lie behind it. My knees were weak beneath me to hear them. For desperate men are no better than wild beasts; you may restrain Leviathan as soon as them.

Up above them, at the window, we held a hasty council of war, the question being, who should conduct the parley that was not to be avoided. 'Twas still being debated, when Mrs. Browning, with a little cry, drew our attention to the distant road, where was come in view a travelling coach, escorted by a company of horsemen, whose accoutrements flashed and sparkled as they rode. Such a sight was rare enough at Cloncall on any day, and at any season to engross our wonder and attention; but on a day in the dark month of December, and at a time when so disquieting rumours were everywhere abroad, 'twas veritably a sight to set one staring and marvelling like any rustic.

The question, "Who can it be?" that sprang to the lips of all of us, could have but one answer. There was but one person that was likely to be abroad in his coach at such a time—but one person that was like to be so attended on his travels; and that person was my lord the Earl of Antrim, who might well be on his way by this time to take up his command in Derry; and something of the tardiest, too, when one came to consider it.

So we said to each other, clean forgetting the clamorous mob below in this new interest. It could be no one else than my lord the Earl, we were agreed.

"But—grant me patience!" said my husband, as the coach went out of view in the hollows, "how comes the man so far out of his way if his way be to his command in Derry? There's something here that is beyond my skill to fathom."

"He's after his runaways, no doubt," said Mr. Canning.

"And a mercy for us if he be," I rejoined, taking note again how the noise from the courtyard below was grown since the rabble were rested.

I can scarce credit mine own memory, and so can scarce hope to be believed when I record what is nevertheless the plain truth—to wit, that these varlets, beginning to find strength and breath after their flight, made so great a riot in front of the house as to drown the noise of the approaching coach with its escort. My Lord of Antrim dropped upon them utterly at unawares, *like a bolt out of a clear sky*, as the saying is, and they being taken by surprise, and my lord's person unknown to them, he stood in some danger of being mishandled among them. But the gentlemen that were his escort—a company of as gallant persons as ever I set eyes on—fell to laying about them with a very good will, so that the rabble gave back from the door and let the coach come up.

By the time the pages had let the steps down, Cargill had opened the door to the new-comers, all the while beseeching the master, who for once was ready to take his counsel, to bethink him of his disguise and of the jeopardy he stood in, and to permit me to do the honours of the house as though he were not present. I even put myself forward without his leave, and stood just within the porch, supported by Mrs. Browning and Mr. Canning upon my right and left, to receive these new guests that fortune, bad or good, had sent me.

Sure, it seemed as the great coach were never to be unladen of them that were in it. A gentleman had descended or ever the house-door was opened; him I knew not. Then came another that I knew and was glad in my heart to see—namely, Colonel Phillips, of Newtown-Limavady. After him came a gentlewoman I had never see before; and after her my Lord of Antrim, something high in his colour and black in his looks, which was little marvel, considering the behaviour of his men. After him came another gentlewoman, with a pair of merry dark eyes of her own that seemed to take in everything at a single sweeping glance—us who waited in the doorway, the gentlemen that by this time were dismounted, and the mob that peeped and scowled behind. Methought that there was little mirth in these same black bright eyes as she turned them on the last; but then she faced towards the coach again, as the rest had done (all but my lord), and waited.

Then one of the pages fetched out a little jackanapes that mopped and mowed in a velvet coat and cap, like a child's. The other brought out a little lapdog wrapped in a costly shawl. These curious passengers were handed to the two waiting-gentlewomen to hold, who took them with the same care and reverence as if they had been human beings and my lord's children.

Next after these came my lord's confessor, a veritable Jack Priest, in cassock and tonsure, that held up his two fingers and blessed the company in the Latin tongue as they bowed to him in the deepest reverence. For mine own part, having no mind to disguise my faith, I gave him no more than the merest ordinary curtsey—scarce that—when his turn came to be presented to me.

But that was not until the last and greatest of this aristocratical company was descended from her coach—to wit, my lady Countess of Antrim, with a face of vinegar, and a voice that matched it for sourness, as she inquired of her jackanapes and her lapdog, before ever she condescended to receive the greetings of her hostess, "How they did, the little sweethearts, and whether they were wearied to death by the jolting of the nasty coach." Never in my life did I hear trifling that matched so ill with the voice and aspect of her that uttered it. Sure, it threw a new light upon the reason why his regiment went so ill-clad and so undisciplined, to see their Colonel and commander so wrapped up in his priest, and his wife, and his wife's antics; for there he stood in the doorway, waiting with the submission of a lackey till her ladyship should have ended her tenderness with her pets, before he should take leave to offer her his hand and lead her into the house.

My lady lifted a pair of scrutinising eyes upon me (who had often been in company with her before), and feigned to have a difficulty in calling my name to mind, wherein my lord was her prompter. And I, on my part, was a little put to it, between irritation and amusement, to find words to inquire for her ladyship's health that should not seem a mere paraphrase of hers to her animals—nay, the impulse, took me to repeat them word for word. It had been so comical a jest, save for its insolence, to have inquired of this acid and disdainful lady, "How she did, the pretty sweetheart, and whether she were tired to death by the jolting of the nasty coach."

Mastering this temptation, I made a shift to receive the Countess in a manner befitting alike her rank and my breed-

ing, presenting Mrs. Browning both to her and to her gentlemen, so soon as these latter had been made known to myself.

Yet it cost me no small effort to force my mind to these small courtesies. Can the compass-needle point to the written north upon the chart, when the true north lies another way? My true north was without among the grooms and lackeys, where stood my husband close to a dozen men that knew his person perfectly well. I looked, every moment, to hear some gentleman speak to him by his name, and ask him what he did in the clothes he wore. And yet the best thing I could do for him was to show no sign of misgiving, or of any interest in him. Being caught where he was, sure, unconcern was his best policy, and boldness his only safety; and to discharge the service of a groom as though 'twere the merest matter of course.

It seemed as if we were never to come within doors, there was so much questioning and answering, and talk of the great portent, that so many men of my lord Earl's were here upon the road when they should have been there in the city. But presently, as some of the fugitives were brought forward to be questioned by their Colonel, my lady Countess signified her pleasure to leave them and go into the house, and so we did.

My eyes, taking the line of Mrs. Browning's, caught sight of her husband among the gentlemen of my Lord of Antrim's following—a welcome sight. It was hard to go out of view of mine, and to know nothing of what befell him; for if once he were noticed, I thought to myself, he was as good as arrested; and if once arrested, as good as imprisoned and executed.

I was busy endeavouring to satisfy my Lady Antrim's questions (sure, to hear the turn she gave them, any one had thought I was responsible for the safe entry of the troops into the city), when my lord enters to us, with a few of his gentlemen.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish, indeed, in the city!" says he, very much ruffled.

"And what is the new trouble?" asks my lady, drawing her brows together. I promise you that she but put the question that was trembling on every lip.

"'Tis neither more nor less than flat rebellion," says my lord; "an overt resistance—ay, and an armed resistance—of the King's troops! 'Twill be a hanging business for the ringleaders, I nothing doubt, unless the King's temper be changed to that of a dove by all his troubles. Figure it, ladies! My foremost com-

pany present themselves duly at the city gates yesterday, showing the King's potent, as, of course, it was right they should. Before the Mayor can have taken time so much as to read it, my men find the gate shut in their faces, and themselves menaced with violence, if they make not the speedier retreat."

"That's old news!" said my Lady Antrim fretfully. "It happened o' Friday. What else turned us from the road to the town, I'd like to ask? It's something newer, I'll warrant, that hath set them scampering for their lives to-day—ay, and something fiercer! What's the new treason?" Then she turned her eyes on me, for all the world as though she blamed me for the whole coil and confusion. "Upon my word," says she, "it passes the limits of belief that sober citizens should comport themselves so unruly."

The blood rushed to my cheeks at her folly, as of a child, that must ever have some one to blame for any mischance.

"Credible or no," says my lord, "Mrs. Hamilton is but too competent a witness of its truth." Here he makes me a pretty bow, adding a word or two of thanks for the timely succour I had afforded to his men. "Why should they be here craving a bite to eat and leave to creep under a roof for the night," he continued, "if they were free to go into Derry, where they had a right to both quarters and rations? The thing speaks for itself."

"Ah, my Lord Antrim!" said I to him, "sure I am as anxious as your lady to know what the new fright is to-day. Did they ask admittance again this morning? If they did, we were mighty near being of their company. And were they repulsed a second time, and if so, in what manner? What thing in the world could be done to them to put them in such a frenzy as we saw?"

My Lord Antrim broke out a-laughing, though in no very mirthful key.

"Of a truth, Mrs. Hamilton," said he, "your questions crowd so fast upon each other that I'm at a loss to answer them all. Ask admittance? I dare say they did, though these fellows below said nothing of it, that I can call to mind. Their story was as confused and as halting as mine is like to be—ill hearing makes ill rehearsing. But as far as I can make out, they were loitering around the town and the Waterside this morning, awaiting my coming, when all on a sudden comes a train-band out of the city, and begins to draw up in the order of attack; and at the same time, to catch them between two foes, comes a troop of horse over

the hills from Glendermot. The men they might have faced, perhaps, though attacked upon two sides at once; but the city guards began to turn their ordnance upon them, and that undid them quite. Poor fellows! 'twas little marvel if they fled; they have had small chance yet of learning the sound of sakers and demi-culverins. Whether they were pursued or no, I can't make out by their own telling; and that is strange, for sure, any one would say that they must have been, and that most furiously to fall into such a panic."

"Are any of them hurt, do you know?" I inquired.

"Why, none of those down in the courtyard," said he. "But that's the strange thing; they can't tell me of any wounds. To be sure, wounded men cannot run very far; they will be found nearer Derry, no doubt." Then he falls a-smiling in a sort of embarrassed fashion. "I can't conceal from myself," says he, "that I am like to have but little credit of my regiment—at least, until they've seen some service, and are hardened. And now," says he, looking round upon us, "what think you of such behaviour from a town reputed loyal and peaceable?"

Again my Lady Antrim made herself the spokeswoman for the rest of us.

"If I tell you what I think, my lord," said she, "I fear 'twill be but little to your liking."

"Never spare for that, my love," said he, with an odd little grimace and a bow. Plainly, it was no uncommon thing for this lady to make speeches that were not to the liking of her lord.

"I am wondering, then," said she, very cold and precise, "whether your lordship can conceal from yourself that the blame lies as much with you as with them? Had you in person presented the potent, the town had never dreamed of disputing it; you can't deny that. Let us hope," continued she, still more lofty and exact, "that this blunder will be a lesson to you. Let us hope that another time you will give ear to those friends who tell you that the commander of a regiment ought to march along with it."

I pitied my Lord Antrim, who looked mighty uneasy.

"Surely," I exclaimed, "there's little wisdom in portioning out the blame at this hour of the day. What's done, is done, and can't be mended; but no doubt some arrangement can be made, if 'twere set about in a proper way."

My lady Countess gave me a look that was designed to bring

me to a sense of my temerity ; but, faith, I never dropped mine eyes. She was no wife of mine, that I should quail before her disapproval, like my poor Lord Antrim, who had never a word to say to my suggestion. But one of the gentlemen that rode with him, my Lord McGuire of Enniskillen, took it up very heartily.

"That's extremely well said of you, Mrs. Hamilton," said he. "There's not a bit of wisdom in crying over spilt milk. There must be something fit to be done to set matters to rights. The thing is, to make up our minds what it is, and then to do it."

"And if I may take leave to express my opinion," said another gentleman, whom they called Colkitto (I think he was one of the MacDonnells of that place, and, indeed, there were some of the gallantest men in the North of Ireland that rode by my Lord Antrim's side in this ill-managed affair)—"if I may take leave to express my opinion," says he, "it would be that the first thing is to get trustworthy news from Derry. Does not your lordship think so?"

"In faith, I do!" said Lord Antrim ruefully. "But who's to get it for us? For I shrewdly fear that any man that's known to be my envoy may whistle for entrance into Derry. Do but think of it!"

At this there arose a perfect competition among the gentlemen that were in the room for the errand, each one pressing his services upon my lord ; the touch of danger that was thought to lie in it added fuel, as it were, to their eagerness. 'Twas impossible not to admire such a spirit ; and it did flash through one's mind at the same time, that if all this gallantry had been at the head of the regiment instead of at the tail, the men had been like to show a better spirit and to behave with greater firmness.

Mr. Phillips, our neighbour, had said mighty little all this time, though listening to every word. Presently he stepped forward to my lord, and began to speak ; and as he spoke, the others fell to listening.

"My lord," said he, "it is perfectly true that any man that is known to come from you will have some difficulty to get into Derry at present. Would your lordship accept of my services as an envoy, for the townsmen have long known me for a friend of theirs, as you are no doubt aware? As one that knows their grievances and their reason for their conduct to your troops, I think they would have confidence in me."

My Lord Antrim all but gasped in his surprise.

"What, sir!" said he. "You know their reasons for it, and their grievances, and you have forbore to tell us of them! How is this? Sure, if we know what they'd be at, we are half-way through our difficulties!"

Mr. Phillips in his turn looked astonished.

"But surely, my lord," said he, "you can't be ignorant of the trouble yourself. You know the state of distraction the whole country's gone into since the news of the massacre went abroad."

"Massacre! What massacre?" asked Lord Antrim, quickly. "You surely don't mean this ridiculous story that's got abroad in the last two days of a rising among the Catholics to attack the Protestants? You don't mean to tell me that there's any man of station or of judgment that believes it?"

Now again it was the turn of Mr. Phillips to be surprised. He and my Lord Antrim, in this colloquy, they bandied astonishment between them as if 'twere a game of ball they were engaged in.

"Why, my lord," said he, "'tis a cordial to hear you mention it in that tone of contempt. But as to believing it, you may take my word there's not a man, woman, or child in Derry but is at least as sure of it as he is of his creed."

"There's a gentleman below," said Lord McGuire—"he that met us upon the road. He, I mean, that was brought to your lordship by the name of Captain Hamilton, of Cloncall, and was known to be none of him as soon as you clapped eyes on him. He is of the city, isn't he?"

"To be sure!" said my lord. "Desire him to have the kindness to step this way, will you? I'd like to hear more of this madness from one that hath been in the thick of it."

Mr. Browning gave him no long time to wait, but was with him upon the moment with my Lord McGuire, two or three more coming with them, so that my room began to show like a guard-room. Being questioned by my Lord of Antrim, Mr. Browning gave a very circumstantial account of the terror and indignation that were felt in the city; at which hearing my lord professed himself more astonished than ever, and deeply shocked and grieved at the mischief wrought by a foolish and heartless joke; for it was thus he spoke of the famous letter to my Lord Mount-Alexander, that had been the beginning of all the alarm.

Mr. Browning stood and listened very gravely to all this tirade.

Then he lifted his eyes very considerably upon my lord, who had wrought himself up into something of a rapture.

"I understand your lordship to speak of this rumour as perfectly false?" said he.

"The most bottomless rubbish, sir!" said my lord. "False and foolish as if the father of lies was the author of it!"

"And how," said Mr. Browning, "can you bring your mind to think so?"

Here was a sudden turning of the tables. My lord, I thought, would fain have blustered; but there was that in Mr. Browning's manner that compelled a courteous answer. He paused for some moments, however, looking from one to another of his company, as though he pondered their tempers and how far it were prudent to speak his mind in their hearing.

"Sir," said he at last, "I'll be better able to answer your doubts if you'll tell me how they've been bred and nourished. What could suggest the thought of such treachery—what could make it seem even possible—I own I'm at a loss to conceive."

If that were so (and, sure, one has no right to doubt it, though it presents my lord as a mere blind bat in his politics, and a man of a singular forgetfulness in his history), he was presently very thoroughly enlightened. Mr. Browning made him no long speech, but in a very few words he laid before him the main grounds of the apprehension and mistrust that were so rife among the Protestants of the province. The disarming of the Englishry; the arming of the Irishry, even to the lower orders; the discharge of the Protestants from the King's troops, and the filling up of their places with undisciplined Irish; the arrogance of the Irish throughout the province for months past; the exhortations of their priests, and the prospects of power and of vengeance that they did not stick to hold out to their people—it passes my wit to recall how, in so few words, he made the whole black catalogue stand out so living and so clear. And not a word that was overstrong for courtesy to my lord's Catholic prejudices, only the simple and exact statement of facts that were within the knowledge of every man in the room. My Lord Antrim's countenance and demeanour altered mightily as he listened.

"Sir," said he, when Mr. Browning had finished, "I own that what you say throws a complete new light on circumstances that, taken one by one, are innocent enough. Will you accept my assurance that the appearance they have of being parts of a design

or plot against you is purely accidental? There was no harm whatever intended to the Protestants of Ulster. I speak from knowledge, sir," he ended very seriously.

Mr. Browning looked straight and earnestly at my lord as he spoke, as one that hath a mind to fathom him that would persuade him, even to the bottom of his soul—ay, and that is able to do it; discerning not merely whether the man be speaking as he thinks, but whether he be of the quality which sees the thing that is. My lord could not be unconscious that he was being weighed and valued.

"Why, sir," said he, "don't you take me? There may be reasons in plenty why his Majesty may desire to have as many of his loyal subjects under arms—men he can depend on—you follow me?—as ever he may. I regret I can't be plainer, for you seem a civil gentleman enough, and a man of singular discretion; but I hope you'll take my word for it."

Mr. Browning bowed.

"Certainly, my Lord Antrim," said he. "I have not the smallest doubt but you speak as you believe, and out of what you are entitled to consider certain knowledge."

"Why, sir," exclaimed my lord, "don't you know that I'm of the Council of State? What more would you have?"

This time Mr. Browning paused before he answered. For certainly 'tis a serious matter for one gentleman to appear to doubt a thing that another hath affirmed of his knowledge.

"Perhaps," said he, "I have already presumed too far upon your lordship's patience."

"Not a bit, indeed!" said Lord Antrim. "On the contrary, you do me a favour when you instruct me where the shoe pinches here in the North."

But though his words were so courteous, there was a certain expectancy in his manner, as of one that thought his honour impugned, and would not suffer the subject to pass till it were righted. And long ere this, the attention of every man in the room was fixed upon the conversation between him and Mr. Browning, who, on his part, replied at once, and frankly, though with a very evident sense of the difficulty he was in.

"My lord Earl," said he, "for your own goodwill towards us—for your own personal intentions—for your interpretation of the intentions of those at the head of affairs—you have said enough, and more than enough. If I can't profess myself entirely reas-

sured on every point, I hope your lordship will take into consideration that all circumstances, for months, have conspired together to raise our suspicions in certain high quarters ; to that degree that it is not easy to suppose them candid, even with their own colleagues, if these should have any friendship towards us."

"If the gentleman glances at the Lord Deputy, there," broke in a certain Colonel Talbot that was in the room, and that is said to be nearer akin to the said Lord Deputy than he can very well own to, "I'll be happy to give him a lesson in faith and in manners at the same time !" And with that he clapt his hand upon his sword-hilt in a very meaning way.

My Lord Antrim raised his hand.

"Sir," said he, "I'd have you to remember where you are, and in what presence ; such offers are not fit for ladies' ears, sir. And I'd have you to remember, besides, that no names were named, sir—better follow a good example, and let them remain unspoken. As to your doubt, sir," and here he turned to Mr. Browning with a deal of dignity—it sat well on him too, and showed him to far greater advantage than his former manner—"as I all but forced you to speak it, I must even pocket the affront. But give me leave to assure you, on the word of a gentleman, that I speak not as I *think*, but as I *know*. Your massacre is a *hoax*, sir, an ill-contrived and spiteful jest—nothing more. And that you will presently see for yourself." And so bowed to Mr. Browning to terminate the conversation.

"I thank your lordship for that assurance, which I am happy to be able to accept," said he, bowing very low ; "and I beg you will pardon any discourtesy I may have been led into, which I should deeply regret, indeed."

"Say no more, sir ; you said nothing blameworthy," he replied ; and so turned towards Mr. Phillips. "Sir," he said to him, "may I beg you will convey the same assurance to your fellow-townsmen ? for I do think you are the fittest man to go between me and the town ; and it is no disparagement to any of you, gentlemen," said he, addressing those that had been so eager for the office, "neither to your courage nor your discretion, you being under a disadvantage that he is free from."

No sooner was this decided, than I saw Mr. Browning slip quietly from the room. "Ah, good friend and true," thought I, with a gush of gratitude at the heart, "you go to send my husband out of danger."

And so it was. For when Mr. Phillips was departing, I could not forbear to excuse myself to my lady Countess, and go to the window to see him start, as, indeed, did many of the rest, for the windows were full of spectators. And sure enough, Captain Hamilton rid among his servants. He lifted his eyes to the windows, and scanned them for a sight of me; I knew it, and drew back, lest any inadvertence should betray him. And as I did so, sure, my very soul fell a-trembling, to see upon a sudden the narrowness of his escape. For what think you? At the very next window were two with their heads together, and another leaning upon their shoulders. They were talking in a low tone; but I promise you I caught every word, for my ears were sharpened by my painful fear.

"'Tis he, I tell you," said one; "I thought so when he stood by my horse's head, below there, and now I'm sure of it."

"What fools we were to let such a chance slip through our fingers!" said another. "It's not too late now, if we were to ride after them."

"And share the credit—and the reward to boot—with a dozen others that would stick their fingers into our pie!" said the first. "No, no, my friend; have patience but for a short hour or two, and we shall have him safe enough when he returns from Derry."

"What ails you against the poor fellow?" asked the man who leant over their shoulders. "He never did you any ill. And, after all, what's a likeness? A groom resembles his master—well, what's more likely? He may have been *born in the family*, like one, that is in company, in my Lord Deputy's."

And so, with a laugh and a wicked sneer, turned on his heel, and left them.

But judge if I prayed in my heart that my husband might have the prudence to remain in Derry, as I sat and talked trifles with my lady Countess and her suite.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW IT WAS RESOLVED TO QUIT CLONCALLY FOR DERRY.

SURE, there were little interest in a circumstantial relation of what we did to pass away the hours until Mr. Phillips should be returned from Derry. The said hours were none so many, after all, and that was a very great and signal mercy; for they were some of the most tedious that ever I passed in my life. Lord! what a burden is the company of a great lady that hath no manners.

And yet, perhaps it is scarce justice to charge upon my Lady Antrim's haughtiness the whole weariness of the waiting, for, certes, there was none of us but had a heart full of trouble or of fear to turn every minute into sixty. 'Tis a true saying, that everything comes to an end at last, if one will but have patience; and would be most encouraging, if one could but realise it at the moment of need. But truly, that afternoon, it might well have seemed as though our lives should come to their end in the meantime, and there had been little enough satisfaction in that.

When at last it was known that Mr. Phillips was kept by force in Derry, with his servants, I clean forgot my weariness in my joy, for now was my husband safe. I could have shouted aloud for very gladness, and so have smothered other noises which were less profitable and less pleasant—I mean my Lord Antrim's railing, and my lady's drops of vinegar venom upon his wounded dignity. For when the messenger delivered the errand he was charged with—to wit, a flat refusal on the part of the city to admit either my lord himself or any of his company within the gates—he became like a child that is thwarted, and a froward child at that. 'Twas the merest folly, for what did he expect?

What had he said himself he expected, when Mr. Phillips offered himself at first to be his envoy? "Good my lord," it now appeared he looked the town should have said, as soon as he was known to be at the gates, "be pleased to enter and to put your foot upon our neck." 'Twas in another fashion the town received his overtures, as any that knew the temper of the citizens might have told him. Having gone so far as to shut their gates in the face of his troops, my lord was no such mighty magician as to charm them open with one wave of his flag of truce. The men of Derry were minded to make good what they had done, and sent him word to that effect.

I was nothing disquieted on Mr. Phillips' account, knowing him too good a friend to the Protestant interest to be hurt by the men of Derry. His letter to my lord ran that he was detained by force; but we knew how force might well be friendship in masquerade in such a time.

And now there was a great council held in my poor house, what was best to be done. Sure, I began to be in pain lest nothing should be done but talk, until it should be too late in the day for them to quit Cloncall. But at last there was a getting to horse, and a marshalling of the men that had been brought in from their flight, and some short time before the falling of the dusk my lord Earl took a courteous leave of us, by the title of allies, and rid away for Coleraine with all his gentlemen, followed by his rabble. It was a long and a weary march for them so late in the day, and at such a season of the year.

As for my lady, it was clean impossible that she should attempt it. I had no choice but to set my house at her disposal, which offer she accepted with a very ill grace, though I know 'twas little worse than my own in making it. Truly, I had little mind for her company; but what could one do? Not to allow a woman delicately nurtured to venture forth upon a journey of fourteen miles, in the dusk of a December evening, were she the veriest shrew and vixen that ever breathed. And this was the ninth of the month, besides, the very night of the massacre.

My Lord Antrim had very much heartened us in respect to that terror, both by his language about it, and by the perfect unconcern he showed in riding away from his lady upon the very eve of it. None the less, the most vigilant watch was kept in our house all night, and who, think you, was the heart and soul of it? Who but Captain Hamilton, who made his

appearance between five and six of the clock, as he had done on the memorable Friday evening, but in a far different frame of mind. This time it was as a jest, a frolic, that he bade me regard his coming.

"Sure, what did you expect?" asked he of me. "Did you think I'd stop in Derry, away from you, at such a time? If you did, your penetration was much at fault. I rid to Derry with the best will in the world, 'tis true, finding my quarters here something over-hot for comfort, with so many that knew me in the house. But be sure I had a plan in my mind; I saw a way clear to return or ever I left, else had I never left."

"And the plan?" I asked him. We were safe in Roland's nursery, but yet I was all in a quaking, lest he had run into a trap. "Do you know that my Lady Antrim and her confessor are still in the house, and her ladies?"

"The plan?" said he, ignoring the rest of my question. "Why, 'twas the very self of simplicity. Having brought Mr. Phillips to the town-hall, I took leave to quit his service with the same absence of ceremony I'd assumed it with. I went straight to your father's house (where, by the way, I had an astonishingly good reception), changed my suit of livery for some of Wamphray's clothes, completed my beggar's errand by borrowing a boat, and rowed back here as fast as I could lay oars to water. I came reconnoitring up the brook, and was in time to see my lord Earl and his company taking their departure; then, the coast being clear, I made my way, with Annot's help, into the house, by the back-door."

"The coast clear indeed!" said I. "Did you hear me tell you that my lady Countess is here still?"

"Why, yes," said he, coolly; "somebody downstairs mentioned the same thing or ever I set foot inside the house, I believe. I can't say I was much impressed by it. Her ladyship does not appear to me in the light of a probable captor, whatever she may do to you."

"She may be all as much to be feared; she or her priest might easily put others on your track," said I. "You ran a nearer risk than you knew to-day already."

And thinking him far too much disposed to make light of the risks he ran, I even told him every word of the conversation I had overheard. He laughed.

"Charmingly tricked, as a man could have done it if he'd gone

about to endeavour it!" said he; "I wish I knew their names. But these I suppose you wouldn't tell me if you knew them."

He was right in that conjecture, and I told him so.

"A woman," quoth he, "hath a poor idea indeed of repaying a piece of friendship. But, Lord, Mary! if you could but see the state the town's in! Never was anything like it, save a fermenting vat. They were on the very brink of admitting the Red-shanks—the very brink! The potent had been presented, and was gone to the Mayor to be allowed; in another minute they'd have been in possession, and the city at their mercy. For none of the headmen could make up their minds to take the responsibility of disowning the King's commission. But at that moment thirteen brave 'prentice-boys were found to make up theirs. They ran together and shut the gates in the Red-shanks' faces—slammed them, by Jove!—and balked the butchers of their prey. The first step being taken, the magistrates were nothing loath to follow; they found some pretext, good enough to stand as a shield betwixt their loyalty and their lives. And now they're as thankful as—well, as they should be, to these gallant 'prentices, whose names, sure, will never perish while Derry's a city."

He paid so much deference to my fears, though he scoffed at them, as to keep well out of sight of my Lady Antrim and her party, which proved the easier that an escort came for them early the next day from Coleraine. Never in the world, I believe, was hostess better pleased to see the last of guest than was I, as my lady took her departure with her gentlewomen, and her priest, and her pets, and her petulance. And not a sound (for 'twas the first word we asked them) had these gentlemen heard, any more than ourselves, of the terrible massacre. Neither sound nor sign of it was there, they told us, between Coleraine and Cloncall; the country lay as quiet and unmolested as though there were never an Ultoagh within an hundred miles.

Was the terror, then, actually at an end? We put the question to each other as we returned into the house after their departure. 'Twas the hardest thing in the world to think so, and yet so it verily seemed. The day that was to have ended us, and cleared the province of English blood, by a very bloody method, was come and gone, and had left neither trace nor scath. Whether, as my Lord Antrim told us, the whole thing was from the first nothing but a malicious jest, designed to make a laughing-stock

of the Protestants in the eyes of all Ireland ; whether the famous Comber letter was written by a true man, but one that was himself deceived ; or whether it was my Lord Antrim that was deceived, and there was a plot indeed, whereof he had no knowledge, but the resistance of Derry broke the neck of it, so that it came to naught, I know not ; and none hath ever been able to discover. Much that passed in Ulster, both before and after the siege, conspires to give a colour of likelihood to the last supposition. But however it may have been, there was never more heard of the massacre, save in the way of recollection and speculation.

And now that the road to Derry lay as open to us as we could wish, what hindered us to take it ? Why were we not up and away to Derry and good neighbourhood as soon as my Lady Antrim's coach was out of sight ?

Faith, I ask myself the question, and can scarce find any answer to it. For one thing, there was no longer fear at our heels to drive us ; the immediate danger, whatever it had been, was past. And that being the case, it will be no surprise to any that hath ever managed either a house or an estate, to learn that there appeared an hundred things to do to put the place in proper order to be left.

I little doubt, however, but that I and my women had been despatched to Derry that same day, in company of Mr. Browning, but for a letter that came from Wamphray, giving an account of all that had been done in the town since the Friday, far more minute than Captain Hamilton had been able to gather in his hurried visit. After all the good and comfortable news came some that was a perfect satire upon it—to wit, the sending of deputations to Dublin and to London to excuse the conduct of the town in those quarters where offence was like to be taken at it. 'Twas enough to move our laughter.

"Why, now," said Captain Hamilton, "did I tell you the reason why they fired those great guns that frightened Antrim's men so horribly ? 'Twas joy—a salute to Prince George of Denmark for having left King James and gone over to the Prince of Orange."

"I can't wonder at them, for all that," said Mr. Browning, "nor blame them, either ; for they can't be in a state to make any effectual resistance to well-appointed troops, such as are sure to be sent down against them. There must be some at headquarters, to be sure, that know what case they're in. They have

no choice but to make terms for the present, though, to speak of them as they merit, I believe there are no men in Ireland less fickle or more steadfast than the men of Derry. Waverers—half-hearted folk and indifferent—what place is free of them? What cause hath not some of them, to its curse? But the bulk of the men of Derry are of another temper."

"I think no less of them, indeed," said Captain Hamilton, "and by consequence I believe they've reason good enough for what they're doing to-day, which, do you see, throws an entirely new complexion on what *we* should do. Mary, I mean, and yourselves. For myself, it matters not one whit; there or here, I'm marked for a rebel, and shall be treated accordingly, if ever they lay hands on me, which the Fates avert! But for her, being by great good fortune, and by the merest chance in the world, on the safe side of the hedge, I'd be for having her stay there. Some of these good folks in Derry would be well enough pleased to be in her shoes, apparently."

"Your proposal, then, I take it, is that she should stay here till the town's affairs are composed," said Mr. Browning.

"When he is with me," I rejoined, "I'd as lief be here as anywhere else in the world."

"I can't be with you very long, however," quoth Captain Hamilton gravely.

"Why not?" said I. "Sure, you run no more risk now in your own house than in the house of any of your friends. All are in the same case—known for favourers of the Prince of Orange, and by consequence held traitors to King James."

He laughed.

"It's the last of my thoughts, or of any man's that I care to call friend," said he, "to sit down in any house, were it the strongest in Ireland, and wait our fate. I must be up and away upon my business in a very short time, I assure you."

"And leave me here by myself?" said I. "Never, surely! I would not pass another week like the last for a thousand pound in my hand."

"Nor would I ask it of you, sweetheart; be assured of that," said he. "I mean you to delay only till this business be arranged and settled."

I threw out my hands with something of passion in the gesture.

"See," I said—and my voice was pitiful in mine own ears—

"what a coil we be in! No side but hath its pitfall; no step to be taken but it may lead toward destruction. An hour ago I'd have been charmed to be sure of another fortnight here to set things orderly and safe before they be left—I'd have been just as pleased to be gone to Derry to safety and the company of friends—now I care not for either; each is a snare, and which the worst none but a seer can tell."

Mrs. Browning took my hand in hers and fondled it out of mere pity. If a man's presence be protection in our troubles, sure 'tis a woman's that is comfort. I came so nigh to weeping that I lost some of the talk between her husband and mine. When next I took note of it they were speaking of that which Captain Hamilton had let drop—of riding abroad presently upon business of importance. He was giving Mr. Browning some account, though very guarded and careful, of the first beginnings of that confederacy of the Protestant gentry in Ulster that came afterwards to be called the Antrim Association, whereof he was from the first a notable and leading member.

They say that "tears dim the eye," but that's a fable; nor is there any more truth in the companion saying that "grief dulls the heart to all but itself." 'Tis the clean contrary. Tears but wash the eye to see the clearer, and grief doth put the heart in touch with a thousand things that else it had been dull to.

My heart and eyes being thus opened and thus washed, there was discovered to them a thing whereof till then I had never dreamed—to wit, the alchemy of war; and how when a man comes but to the verge of its fiery circle his quality is tested as by nothing else on earth. He that in time of peace stood as a rare good fellow, an excellent companion over a bottle, is now no more than a rotten stick, a mere bag of wind; or else perhaps he is now no more a pleasant companion, but a true and trusty comrade. I sat silent on my chair, and heard near every man of my acquaintance weighed and classed, and it was like the parting of the sheep from the goats at the Day of Judgment. Among the goats were many ancient and beloved friends to all of us; they spoke of such with all affection—nay, I thought sometimes with affection and respect made but the keener by their differences. Sure, it was no light thing that set the hand of my husband against the hand of such a man as Patrick Sarsfield, or put him in opposition to so many of his own kindred and name. A verse of Holy Scripture came so forcibly into my head, and so often, that at last I spoke it out.

" 'A man's foes,' " said I, " 'shall be they of his own household.' "

" Ay, truly," said Mr. Browning. " 'Brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the parent the child ;' " so it hath been always in such times of heart-searching, and so it shall ever be. There's no tie of kindred so strong but a true conviction will break it."

" But why," exclaimed Captain Hamilton—" why can't they open their eyes and look ? The truth here is as plain as the sun at noon ; 'tis mere blindness that will deny it."

" There was never any such truth from the beginning of the world," said Mr. Browning. " Think of the old fable of the shield that was golden on the one side and silver on the other. Such a shield is every matter that can be so much as questioned."

" This cannot be questioned," exclaimed Captain Hamilton, with conviction. " Who can doubt the duty of faithfulness to truth, and to liberty of conscience ? "

" Or who, say they," replied the other, " can call in question the duty of loyalty to the sovereign, Divinely anointed as he is ? No, Hamilton ; our side of the shield is the golden one, or so we think it ; but theirs is as righteous in their own eyes, and perhaps is precious metal also."

" Hang it, man ! " said Captain Hamilton, " you're talking like one of the waverers exactly. Take heed you be not found among the half-hearted, when all's done."

" That certainly were destruction," said he, with a gleam on his face between meditation and smiling.

By some strange trick of the mind, that and his words together set my memory questing into the past ; and the thing it brought to my recollection was the conversation we had upon the day after Captain Hamilton's escape. Then also he had shown a tolerance—nay, a fellow-feeling—for those of the opposite party that was wonderful in a man of opinions so strong. It threw me into a fit of musing, wherein word by word, picture by picture, came back into my mind the marvellous story he had told us, and its application. That which he had said, and for which my husband had blamed him, had something of the same spirit. Here again were men of different creeds contending ; for, sure, a man hath a creed in politics no less than in religion. Here again was one that acknowledged kindred in spirit in spite of difference in form. I marvelled at it, but in a groping fashion I understood.

For here, likewise, each was "firmly persuaded in his own mind," and revered in his adversary that which made his own virtue. Here again it was a kind of measure of the virtue, that it could accord reverence to that which was so opposite to itself.

Yes, mine eyes were opened, and I saw the beauty of the saying as I had not done at first. Blind mortals as we be, and so easily led astray, 'tis "for the truth" we should strive rather than against the error. Being well-nigh as like to err as to breathe, as we are, is it the less our duty to uphold to our last gasp the truth we be persuaded of? Is it not, indeed, the source and summit of any worthiness we have?

And if it be, how dare we refuse to others, our fellows, a like duty and right? It came again to the old conclusion—the chivalrous conclusion that hath braced the arm of so many a champion from old time till now—Let each do his devoir knightly and worthily, and may God show the right.

My mind dropped down from these aerial flights, and mine eyes along with it; and then I was suddenly aware that all this while they had been fixed full, but unseeing, on Mr. Browning's. With most men that had put me to the blush; but with him it mattered not a whit. By some strange inner vision I divined in him a similar train of thought to my own.

"*Ô sanctâ simplicitas!*," said I, as our eyes met.

"'Tis the whole case in a nutshell," he rejoined.

Captain Hamilton looked as though he thought us suddenly gone demented.

"If that's your way of discussing your preparations for getting you gone to Derry," said he, "then I've forgot my Latin."

I laughed in my own despite.

"I can make no plans for that to-day," said I; "I have no heart for it. To-morrow—wait till to-morrow. To-morrow I'll set about it in earnest, both plans and preparations. I cannot choose but think of all that is past so newly to-night. To-morrow I'll wake with mine eyes turned towards the future."

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW ONE OF US REFUSED TO QUIT CLONCALLY.

ON the morrow, therefore, we began to prepare for leaving Cloncallly; 'twas a heavy task for the few hands that remained to execute it, and made the heavier by the ill-liking we had to it. But "needs must," if it hath no law, neither doth it brook paltering; and it was needs must now with us.

Had the choice of a boon been offered me in these days, I make little doubt but I had asked for a glimpse into the near future; 'twas a thing I could not hinder myself from musing upon day and night. What did I think to see, I wonder, that I longed so greatly to lift the veil which hid it? Did I think myself upon another Mount of Pisgah, whence another Land of Promise was to be descried? Perhaps I was, had I been endowed with the prophet's full gift of vision. But across what burning deserts of trial, across what rivers of bitterness, across what a Red Sea of blood and death, had I discerned its beauties! And all these were to be traversed, though scarce a soul of us guessed the least of them, ere that good land and large, where we be now arrived, should be won.

Among all our causes innumerable for gratitude to the Father of mercies, is there any, I wonder, greater than this, that in His dealings with us purblind mortals He doth guide Himself by His own knowledge and not by our prayers?

As to the preparations that busied us, both for our subsistence during our sojourn in Derry and for the safe-keeping of that part of our property that could not be taken with us (for lack of fodder or of storage-room), 'twere both tedious and useless to record them. To what purpose should I set down the names of those who had

charge of the young cattle, or of those that were entrusted with the milch kine; to what places of supposed security they were taken by those faithful servants, and how bestowed to escape the eyes of those hungry foragers that it needed no gift of prophecy to expect? That a great contribution, both in cattle and grain, was despatched to Derry towards the maintenance of the troops there, 'tis likewise unnecessary for me to mention; for what man was there among the Protestant gentry of the province that did not the same, according to his means and quality? He that had money gave money; he that had men brought these; he that had store of provision sent that; some that had none of such things gave others that were as valuable, as Mr. Morrison and Mr. Sherman, the apothecaries, of their drugs, and Harvey and Curlew their time and trouble in administering the stores that were sent in.

Every day, by some sure messenger, we had tidings from the city, and it was nothing less than wonderful how all was organised there. All the men in the place that were fit to bear arms were by this time formed into six companies, and kept watch and ward turn and turn about, for all the world like professed soldiers. And every householder had his time appointed to hang out lighted cressets on his house-front, so that the city was conveniently lighted by night, and the business of its defence went on near as well as by day.

All this was done systematically, though it was well enough known that envoys were gone both to Tyrconnel and to London to excuse the behaviour of the city to the Red-shank garrison. It was said with praise that, however our chiefs might hope for a fair answer, they would be ready for a rough one. Another thing that was both observed and commended was the advancing of five out of the thirteen 'prentice-boys (that had been foremost in the affair of shutting the gates) to be officers of the city guard; three of them being appointed ensigns, and two lieutenants. The headmen of Derry had evidently no intention of disowning them that under God had been the salvation of the place.

I presently found that, in spite of the distaste I had to life in the city, much of mine interest and most of my thoughts were gone thither in advance of me. But there be two things of those that happened before we quitted our own pleasant home that have places in this narrative, and cannot be omitted from it.

The first is the unaccountable conduct of Rabbie Wilson, the

gardener, which angered me not a little at the time, though in after-days it turned so greatly to mine aid. He was the same man that, upon the terrible evening of the 7th, had quitted his post in the front of the house to listen to the parleying that was going on in the rear thereof. Certes, after the reproof he then received, and the way he took it, I had thought Rabbie bound to me and to my service as much as Annot his wife—next to Margery Hamilton, the most faithful of all my women.

But now there appeared reason to doubt whether this were so indeed; for the man began to show a pernicious habit of being absent from his post again and again. 'Tis true, that whatever was given him to do he did; even creditably and punctiliously. But the thing being done, where was Rabbie? Nowhere to be seen; though, to be sure, he came when called, and that without any great delay.

After a few days this began to annoy me mightily. It was not, indeed, that his absences caused much inconvenience; but, then, they were unaccountable, and consequently provoking. Why in the morning, when the other men came to take their orders, was Rabbie never with them till he was sent for? Why at dinner-time did he constantly make his appearance when the rest had half finished? Why, if at any chance moment during the day he was needed, was it always necessary to send for him? And why was he still so eager to be gone the moment he could be spared? In former time he had been the exact contrary of all this. Not dilatory, perhaps, considering his age, but leisurely in all he did. An excellent trencherman, and in no hurry to set it by. Above all, a gossip in grain—willing to suspend any occupation to discuss the smallest piece of news with anybody, pleased especially if his betters should notice him or converse with him.

The thing was a mystery to me, and as such to be solved. But sure there was so much to see to, that it was not till he had been out of the way when wanted that I questioned him. I spoke; I hope, with great mildness; for, being an old and trusted servant of the family, he was neither to be harshly treated nor lightly accused. Nevertheless, he cast a very angry glance toward the kitchen, whence came the sound of women's voices—Margery's, to wit, and that of Annot his wife.

"Hoots, my leddy!" said he, "ye wadna heed a blash o' clash—idle clavers!"

This, however, was scarce the answer to satisfy me.

"You forget," said I to him in a tone of voice something sterner, "that I have eyes and ears of my own. No one hath brought me evil reports of you. I have seen for myself that you're never at hand of late—never to be found without search. What's the meaning of it?"

"I was never far to seek," returned he. "I'm gey an' sure naebod's ever needed to cry on me twice."

This was true, and though it seemed designed to put me in the wrong, I at once admitted it.

"But," said I to him, "why should you be to seek at all? You were never wont to be so."

The old man turned upon me like a dog that snarls at the whip.

"Weel, my leddy," said he, "was I ever to seek when there was aucht set me to do, or hae ye only fau't to find wi' onything ye ever gae me to do?"

"No, never," I replied; and was about to add what, when all's said, is the truth, that 'tis part of the duty of every mistress to know where to find any of her servants at any moment; but he broke out angrily:

"Aweel, then, I think ye hae little to do to find fault wi' me. Feggs! them 'at couldna find me was gey slack seekers. A whistle frae your fine siller ca' wad hae brocht me in a meenit."

With that he turned and left my presence, not waiting my dismissal. I for my part stood astonished. The man had now and then permitted himself small liberties of speech with his master and myself, such as were very pardonable in so old a servant; but never before had he transgressed the bounds of strict respect.

Now that he had done so so completely, I was a little put to it to know what order to take with him. To speak to him again, and be met most likely with sullenness, were a course wanting in dignity; while, on the other hand, should I mention the matter to Captain Hamilton, he was sure to be over-harsh with the old man. For now I made sure that there was some trouble in his mind that had caused him to speak to me in so unwonted a manner. I fell to wondering what this secret trouble might be, but could imagine no explanation that was either likely or sufficient.

He went about all the rest of that day in a very hang-dog

fashion ; and certainly there was no need to send for him, he seemed to be trying to catch my eye wheresoever I turned. Not having decided what to do, I looked not near him ; and when I had aught to say to him, I made Cargill my spokesman. Perhaps this was enough to show him his fault, or perhaps his own conscience did that without hint from me. At any rate, he lay in wait for me towards evening, and accosted me.

"Madam," said he, "I was sair to blame to speak back till ye as I did, and I crave your pardon."

"You were," said I. "I was astonished, and very angry with you."

"Nae doot, nae doot," said he with contrition. "But them 'at seeks a man suld seek him in his ain bit. Had I bin socht in ma gairden, fac', I'd 'a bin fund."

This explanation was as singular as his behaviour ; for what hath a gardener to do in his garden in the month of December ? Rabbie was known for a man of probity, or else I had begun to suspect him shrewdly of a design to throw *dust in mine eyes*, as the saying hath it. The more I turned it about the less I made of it, and therefore the next morning I even put the matter to the test.

"Come, Rabbie Wilson," said I to him, "show me this great piece of work that hath taken up every spare minute you've had for a week past."

I went towards the garden, and he followed me thither without a word.

At the first glance all seemed there as it ever doth in the winter—that is to say, blank spaces beset with dead bushes, and separated by alleys of grass which stood rank and rimy. But down the middle of the midmost path there was a track, whereon the grass was trodden flat and the hoar-frost gone. This track we followed, and in the middle of the garden, where the wide alley crosses it from side to side, we came to a new-set hedge of quicks, the bushes so high and thick that it must have been a heavy task to transplant them ; not to mention the still greater labour of bringing them from the wood that bounds one side of the garden, and through which the brook descends, in leaps and rapids and quiet pools, to join the river.

Rabbie looked upon the hedge with a kind of gloomy satisfaction.

"It's a gran' season for transplantin'," quoth he meditatively.

"A wee stiff to steer wi' the frost in the gr'und, but no a drap o' sap startin'; a' dead sleepin'. Come May, noo, or maybe come April, there's no a crater, unless he's bin bred a gaird'ner, will ever think that hedge a day less than ten year auld."

"Perhaps not," said I. "But what's the use of it?" And perhaps I put the question sharply, for the hedge was an ugly blemish in my fair garden.

He looked at me with commiseration for my ignorance.

"What use, my leddy?" quoth he, with a pitying smile.

"It's weel seen ye hae nae mind o' the Forty-ane."

So it might be thought, considering that I was not born for more than twenty years after that! I laughed as he said it.

"I was a hafflins laddie at the time," quoth Rabbie. "But, losh, I mind it yet! My certie, if ye had but seen the gairdens thae sogers left ahint them, ye wadna be speerin the use o' a hedge! A herd o' swine, an' every sow wi' a deevil in its belly, couldna hae wrocht mair mischeef."

Still I did not see—and so I told him—what this hedge should do in the way of restraining such riotous creatures.

"If it were to keep them out of the garden," said I, "I'd understand it; but here's more than half of it left undefended and open, before ever you come at the hedge."

"Aha! my lady," quoth he triumphantly; "they may even tak' their wull o' *this* hauf o't. Ere I quit Cloncallly, a'thing worth castin' a thoct till will be planted on the tither side o' that hedge. A' my Virginia strawberries is there already."

"But what's to keep them from breaking through as soon as they see that the better part of the garden's on the other side of the hedge?" I asked him.

"Ou but ye see that's juist what they'll *no* see," quoth Rabbie. "The hedge is gey an' heigh o'en noo; an' 'twill be gey and thick as weel, come simmer. It a' lies in sae weel, too; the slope o' the gr'und fits in sae bonnily. Wad ye no think yoursel', ma leddy, 'at the gairden ended there, if so be ye didna ken better?"

"I think I'd try to peep over it, all the same," said I; "and so, take my word for it, will the Irish soldiers—if they come."

"Ou, they'll maybe *no* come," he admitted. "Ye hae a chance. Cloncallly's no on nane o' the main roads, an' no sae terrible near the ceety, neither. You'll maybe be passed over; I'll no say. But gin they come, let them peep, for Rabbie. I hae

a plan o' stickin' in a bit sauch-buss here, an' a bit sauch-buss there; an' by the time the leaf be green, I'll wad my best pair o' breeks there's naebody 'll ever jalouse it's ony mair nor a waste bit. They'll be gey daft that'll push through a quick-thorn hedge to win at the like o' that."

It seemed no better than trifling to me to provide with such sedulous care for the preservation of a few shrubs and herbs, when so many things of far more value, and more like to take harm, must even be left to their fate. But who could find it in his heart to say as much to a man whose soul was so wrapped up in his work as Rabbie's? I was turning back to the house, with even a word of encouragement on my lips, when he led me to the right, along the wide green alley.

"For ye may as weel see the haill o't, since ye're here," he reflected aloud.

The rest of it was a plan he had for destroying the wilderness, that is the lowest part of the garden beyond the little summer-house, in the same manner, by filling it with salallows and other things that take root easily and grow fast, so as to make of it a thicket that should seem as it had never been touched by the hand of man. Then the part of the garden which held his cherished plants would be converted into a kind of island—a place cut off on all sides from intrusion, or even suspicion. Had the end been but worth the pains, it had been a clever plan enough.

But complete as he had made it, he seemed unsatisfied, and mused and murmured as he was leading me back to the house.

"I'm terrible vexed at leavin' thae Virginia strawberries," said he. "A' the way frae Hamilton, in Scotland, I got them; I'd 'a likit weel to see hoo they turned oot. The Duke's gaird'ner tellt me there never was sic fruit seen in this country."

He seemed still to muse with discontent upon the prospect of leaving them, even after the pains he had been at to conceal them. As I was going into the house he stopped me, laying his hand upon mine arm.

"Feggs!" said he. "I've gude a-mind to bide here, an' tak' my chances, as weel as my gairden."

This was the first time, evidently, that the idea had entered his head; but having once thought of it, he grew every day more in love with the notion. The man's whole heart was in his work, as I said but a moment ago, and any hardship that he might suffer by staying at Cloncallally seemed ever the slighter, the more he

thought of it, in comparison with the grief of leaving his plants bereft of his fostering care.

He turned the project over and over in his mind, until it grew into resolution, and then he announced it.

"Them 'at likes can gang intil Derry," said he; "but it's nane o' Rabbie. A'll bide whaur I am."

To this he stuck, in spite of all expostulations. Whatever we might urge of the dangers he ran by remaining, he answered us after that in one set formula, which was this:

"Weel, weel, I'm gaun nae sic airt; no a fit o' me!"

And once, when Annot, his wife, importuned him to change his mind, he so far departed from his Puritan sobriety of phrase as to express it thus: "*De'il* a fit o' Rabbie; *de'il* a fit o' me! I've said it, and I'll stick til't."

After that we knew that his resolve was indeed taken, and forbore to urge him any more to change it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW THE LORD VISCOUNT MOUNTJOY CAME BACK TO CLONCALLY.

AND now the intelligence that reached us daily from the city (for, naturally, there was a constant coming and going between Cloncallly and the house we were going to, and every man that went in upon an errand brought back a return cargo of tidings) began to be all of the approach of my Lord Mountjoy. All the talk, likewise, was of the articles that should be agreed to between him and the city.

There was a mighty discomfortable rumour in the air that he was sent down by the Lord Deputy with the full strength of his regiment, to reduce the place; 'twas much debated, but little heeded, if it may set down a statement that hath so much the look of a contradiction. Contradiction there is none in reality, for though it was very likely that Tyrconnel had given charge to my lord to be sharp and severe with us, yet he was known for one that would be just, at all hazards. And from strict justice, the men of Derry thought themselves to have little to fear.

I have sometimes heard the Lord Deputy Tyrconnel described as a great administrator, and that by persons who should, as I thought, have know better. Such an estimate doth argue partiality rather than judgment, to my mind. Violence is not strength, neither is deceit ability; and if a man be known for one that speaks ever fairer than he means, save when he threatens more than he dares, what value do men put upon his promises, or what fear do they attach to his threats?

That was my Lord Deputy Tyrconnel—violent to mere brutality when there was no reprisal to be apprehended; apt to menace those he dared not lift a finger against; ready to promise any-

thing in the world to gain an end, but never casting a thought to the performance of his promise when the end was gained, unless, indeed, he had in view some other remoter purpose. But tyrannous, false, unscrupulous as he was, he had a good thought and a true insight when he determined to send my Lord Mountjoy into the North to deal with Derry.

My lord was a Royalist, and yet an ardent Protestant, accredited, therefore, as one might say, to both sides, and acceptable to the moderate men of both; one that was known to be as faithful to his undertakings as the Lord Deputy was faithless; loyal to his friends, and just to such as differed from him; he was the picked man for the work, and Tyrconnel, for once, had the wit to see it.

And yet I have sometimes wondered, in the light of his after-conduct, whether 'twas my lord Viscount's personal fitness that had weight with him, or another accidental advantage which he possessed—to wit, his office of Master of the Ordnance in the kingdom. This placed him, as it were, *behind the scenes* with us, so that he knew, and must have informed my Lord Deputy, of that which was the weak point of our whole position; which was (as Mr. Browning had surmised at the first rumour of their endeavour to justify themselves with the authorities) the lack of arms and ammunition. It was common talk by this time, that there were but one or two barrels of powder in the magazine; and this, of course, the Lord Mountjoy was as well aware of as they that had the charge of it. Add to this knowledge of his, of their weakness, the confidence and respect they had in his character and for his person, and it should seem as though there were little needed to induce or else to compel their submission.

There was no house in the province, I believe, where the state of affairs was oftener or more keenly debated than in ours. Captain Hamilton, who long ere this had cast aside his disguise, and was riding hither and thither openly in his own name, among men that were as deeply dipped as himself, had it continually on his lips. The views of near every man of weight in Derry were known to him, and were such as he approved.

"By mine honour!" he would say, "if Mountjoy looks that they should lay their neck under his heel, he'll be finally astonished, that's all! The men that have drawn the sword are ready to abide its award, rather than betray a hair of the meanest head in the city to punishment—ay, even they that were the most

anxious to clear themselves in Tyrconnel's eyes. It's not Mountjoy's advantage in the power of powder and shot that'll bring them to their knees, and so he'll find, however little he likes it ! ”

Never yet, as he showed each time he heard or mentioned the name of Lord Mountjoy, had Captain Hamilton forgiven him for what he deemed his unfair dealing towards himself. And I, that could have shown him how far the lord Viscount's intentions had been from unfriendship towards him, had perforce to hold my tongue, being bound in respect of that unruly member by my lord's saying “ that he committed his honour into my keeping.”

Presently we had certain news, no less than by an envoy sent into Derry in the person of Captain MacAusland, that Lord Mountjoy was come as near to us as to Omagh. Next he was come as far as the Raphoe, and some of the headmen of the city were gone to confer with him there, and to endeavour to agree upon articles. In that, it presently appeared, they were unsuccessful ; for my lord was come as near as to Strabane, where he was to receive another set of deputies from Derry ; but of that which was agreed to between them, or whether any articles at all had been agreed to, we could get no certain information, and each fresh report was a flat contradiction of the last. The fact was that the citizens themselves had no better grounds than guesses and surmises for their reports. This alone was certainly known : that the terms the city stood out for were such, both for safety and for honour, that my lord Viscount had either no mind or no power to grant them.

This was the state of matters, one dark and drizzling day, at the darkest of the year, when I was alone in the house, save for the servants, Captain Hamilton having ridden abroad upon his business. We were but awaiting the settlement between my lord and the city to begone from Cloncallly ; and to say the truth, Cloncallly was so far dismantled that 'twas no longer a very enticing abode to linger in. I passed from room to room, noting the bareness of each and the coldness ; the sound of the rain upon the windows brought it to a point of very wretchedness. I was well-nigh reconciled to be gone, and every gust of the raw, chilling wind seemed to set my heart the looser from the ties of home.

Presently Cargill came in search of me, with a face full of hesitation and doubt.

“ An it please you, madam,” said he, “ there's a party of

gentlemen below desiring to see you. It's no day to keep them cooling themselves at the door until I make sure of your pleasure, and so I have even shown them in to the hall fire."

"Why, that was very right of you," said I. "Why do you look strangely at me? sure, any that come to Clonccally on such a day must be friends indeed—or else foes indeed, and be here upon pressing business."

"Why, that's the reason," said Cargill. "Matters went none so smoothly the last time they were at Clonccally. I scarce knew whether to ask them in, or to shut the door in their faces."

"Who are they?" said I.

"My Lord Mountjoy is one," said Cargill, and was about to name the others, but I cut him short.

"My Lord Mountjoy!" I said; "and you're in doubt whether to let him in or no!" Then remembering that he knew no more than the surface, so to speak, of my lord's behaviour to his master, "Cargill," said I, "you've heard of the folly of *quarrelling with one's bread and butter*, no doubt? Take my word for it, 'tis no wiser to quarrel with one that holds our fortunes—and perhaps our lives—in his hand! Go quickly to my lord, and show him all becoming courtesy; I'll be with him in a minute."

"And what of the master and his pleasure?" said the old man, still with a very dubious face. "And his safety even, for aught I know?"

"You will cause one of the men to await him at the turn of the road," said I. "Let him know who is in the house, and he will do what he thinks fit."

But, in truth, I had little fear for his safety. My lord had no doubt given me warning that, should he find him again in his power, he should have no choice but to take him. But that, though but three weeks ago in time, was *an age ago*, in all reason. Since then, the whole Protestant gentry of the North had got themselves as deeply tintured with rebellion as he; and my lord Viscount would find his hands something over-full were he to attempt to take every man that had made himself obnoxious to the representatives of King James.

All this time I knew nothing of the names of Lord Mountjoy's companions. My astonishment was not small to find that one of them was no other than Colonel Lundy, whom I had little cause to love. The other was my lord's young son Marmaduke. So chilled

to the bone he seemed, that I disguised my surprise at seeing Lundy by making some little bustle about the lad's comfort. He saw it, nevertheless—no doubt his conscience made him clear of sight—and taxed me with it.

"I believe," said he, "I'm the last man in the regiment that you hoped to see in my lord's company."

"I had no reason," said I coldly, "to expect the honour of a visit from my lord at all. Any gentleman he brings with him must, of course, share in his welcome."

"However unwillingly?" said he, with an odd kind of smile. "Never trouble to deny it, Mrs. Hamilton; I know you do not love me."

Whatever the man's motive was in forcing me on so disagreeable an avowal, 'twould have been out in another minute; for, sure, I had never wrested my conscience to spare his feelings, and a half-denial in such a case is a whole confession. But my lord interposed.

"I make little doubt," said he, "but you think we had neither of us much right to present ourselves in your house after what happened the last time we were here. But I could not, somehow—perhaps I ought to have obtained your permission first—endure to be so near you and not to ask for myself how things have gone with you since that event; which, I'm sure you'll believe, I deplored the necessity of as much as yourself, or near it. It hath been but an ill time since then for a lady to keep house by herself, unprotected. Hath any one molested you on account of Hamilton's imprudence? I must take leave to tell you that I've suffered some anxiety lest they should."

"So little," said I, "that it hath never once entered my head to think that such a thing was likely."

"Now, that was strange," said Lundy—"exceeding strange! So unwonted an immunity might have set some minds speculating on the probability of *friends at Court*."

He gave a very meaning glance towards my lord as he spoke. But I endeavoured to look as though the glance were utterly lost on me, needing no warning to be careful in such a presence how I gave the least clue to any secret understanding between my lord and me.

"And if it be so," I rejoined, "my ignorance of the peril I stood in is no bar to my gratitude to any that hath interested himself in my behalf."

"And if it were so," said my lord, "sure, there's little cause for gratitude, or for concealment either, if a man hath spoken a good word for the wife of a comrade of his that is under a cloud."

This was so near an open avowal from the Lord Mountjoy of the pains he had been at to save me from punishment of some sort—perhaps from confiscation, perhaps from imprisonment, possibly from both—that I could not forbear to thank him then and there. 'Twere an ill return to involve him in danger, no doubt, but it flashed across my mind that this could scarce be so wrested as to do him harm, his action in my favour being bound to be known to them he had approached on my behalf.

"Ah, my Lord Mountjoy," said I to him, "'tis all very well to disclaim gratitude; but, sure, he that renders another so great a service must even make up his mind to accept it. My insensibility to my danger doth only add strength to mine, now that my eyes are opened." Words failed me to express my thanks, so that I stretched out my hand to Lord Mountjoy, who took it and bent over it. "You, too, Colonel Lundy," said I, "must accept my thanks, for that you opened mine eyes in mine own despite."

"By the Lord! a scene of sentiment!" said a voice at the door of the room, so altered by surprise and resentment that I scarce knew it for my husband's.

He advanced into the room, bowing twice, almost to the ground, to my Lord Mountjoy. The lad, Marmaduke Stewart, on the settle by the fire, where I had placed him, gazed from one to another of us with wide-open, wondering eyes. Captain Hamilton bowed to him also with the most extreme ceremony.

"My lord Viscount!" said he. "This is indeed a most unexpected visit, and one of which I feel myself totally unworthy. Your lordship's son, too! You do my poor house even too much honour. I own I was unprepared for it. God give me grace to show my gratitude!"

My lord had never a word to say, but stood as disconcerted as if he had really served Captain Hamilton the scurvy trick he believed. Only he stole a side-glance at me, as though he said, "You can put this right, if it please you."

For me, I had it on the tip of my tongue to explain. But, as if to bring me in mind of my clear duty, Captain Hamilton turned round to Lundy with hand outstretched, and voice that rang welcome—so to point the difference of his regard.

"Lundy!" said he. "Dear old friend! This is a true

pleasure ; for I'm sure that you haven't come single-handed to catch me, for all as pernicious a rebel as some have done me the honour to make me out."

For Lundy, he seemed to change in the twinkling of an eye, from the cold, sarcastic being he had been but an instant before my husband's appearance, to the bluff comrade, a little concerned to think what part he had played the last time his friend and he had been in company.

"Faith, Hamilton," said he, "there's not many would bear as little rancour as you do, considering how I was forced to treat you the last time I was in your house. You do me the justice to believe that 'twas nothing but a sense of duty that wrought with me—that's the truth. 'Tis no more than justice ; but yet I thank you."

The man's voice rang honesty so feelingly, that, faith, I went near to chide myself for my mistrust of him. On my husband the effect was different. I believe that, in his resentment against my lord, he had forgotten how keen Lundy had been to secure him ; how unfriendly he had behaved, and how set upon his undoing. Of a sudden he remembered it, and he looked upon Lundy strangely. Then again he held out his hand to him.

"It's a fact," said he, "that you were something harsh with me that night, Lundy. Still, perhaps you conceived yourself bound, as you say. Let bygones be bygones, say I, and here's my hand on it."

It was like a reconciliation of two lovers. Any one had said that Lundy was affected nigh to weeping. And yet, somehow, my distrust of the man came uppermost once more.

Marmaduke Stewart behind me whispered his father.

"Why does Hamilton flout you so ?" said he. "Why do you let him ?"

"I have thrust myself into his house unbidden," said his father, very low, "and must endure it."

That recalled me to my senses. I took my lord by the hand, and I rallied all my courage—for, indeed, 'tis no pleasure to me, nor no light thing, to brave my husband.

"That's excellently well said of you, my dear James !" said I, striving to speak easily and lightly, but only succeeding in speaking with a quivering thickness in my voice—"excellently well said ! And it may apply to other cases than Colonel Lundy's. Had you heard as you came in what it was that my lord avowed—

that Colonel Lundy made him avow—of the friendship he hath showed me at Tyrconnel's court, in preventing me from being molested on account of your disgrace, or of what I did myself to get you off, you'd be well assured that it was in spite of a very real friendship for both of us that he acted as he did. Let bygones be bygones say I as well as you, and please your wife by being reconciled to one that I am sure is your friend at heart."

I reached my hand for his as I ceased speaking, meaning to have clasped it in Lord Mountjoy's; but Captain Hamilton hesitated.

"Befriended you?" said he. "Why, I am grateful for that! And I well believe there was plenty of opportunity. Why, yes! now that I think of it, there must have been somebody—and somebody high in favour and influence—at Tyrconnel's ear, else had you certainly heard more of that night's work than you've done. And yet he that sets the ball a-rolling may very well try to guide it away from the innocent; 'tis no more than his duty."

"'Tis no more than his duty, indeed," said my lord very proudly. "And Mrs. Hamilton will do me the justice to bear me witness that I claimed no thanks."

At that Captain Hamilton caught him not by one hand, but by both, shutting the left so hard upon my right hand that I winced; but sure, the pleasure of reconciling these two put the pain clean out of my head.

"Mountjoy," said he, "I've wronged you. I know it, and I ask your pardon. An old comrade, one that stood my friend always, I should have understood you better! You acted as you did for my sake; you meant to give me a chance, and you did."

"Your wife," said the other, with shining eyes—"your wife knew that from the first."

Then, I promise you, my crushed hand pained me, and so did my heart. Here was a fine reward to my lord for his friendship, that the very thing I was bound by my promise to keep sacredly secret should come to light in the hearing of the man I most distrusted. He stepped forward with the most open brow in the world.

"That's as it should be, now," said he. "I make you my compliment, Mrs. Hamilton, on your talents as a peacemaker."

So frank was he in his manner, and so much sincerity rang in his voice, that I could not choose but to ask myself, "Have I been all this time mistaken in the man?" Was this mere cowardice,

I wonder, under the mask of charity?—a weak desire to shut mine eyes to the thing that had been done, if Lundy were the traitor I had hitherto thought him? That was what I feared at first; but before we parted company I was to find my doubts of him well-nigh lulled to rest.

As for my lord, it was as though he had cast a mask from his face and a weight from his spirits; he became as gay as a school-boy. Captain Hamilton met him half-way; it was as if the differences of their opinions were blotted out and forgotten; they spoke with as little appearance of reserve as though they were both of a side. When I begged my lord's pardon for serving him so far beneath his quality, for not an ounce of plate was there left in the house to set before him, "Methinks," said he, "I see a tablecloth; and that is so great and unwonted a luxury that it is impossible to take note whether the dinner be served in plate or in pewter."

"You were never wont to be so Spartan in your camp furniture," said Captain Hamilton.

"No more I was," he returned; "but formerly I was a man and a colonel of infantry. Now I'm no better than a cannon-ball, fired by Tyrconnel at the head of your infant rebellion in Derry. What time hath a cannon-ball to think of comfort? I, upon my word, have had scarce longer." And so fell to describing the shifts he had been put to on his march from Dublin, so merrily that the hall rang with our laughter.

"It must be confessed you are reasonable folks in the North," said he, when presently the talk had glanced round from his march to his mission. "You're aware, of course, that I was written to—in the name of the city, no less—to intercede with the Lord Deputy in their behalf. I do so to the best of my poor ability; and now that I am come in person to accommodate matters, what do I find? Why, that 'tis your very humble servant I am made, to listen to your orders, not to make terms between you and the authorities. Oh, it's the plain fact!" he continued, as Captain Hamilton seemed to demur. "Phillips, Kennedy, and the rest—you should hear them! 'You will be pleased,' they tell me, 'to get a general pardon for us all.' 'Command me, by all means,' I rejoin; 'tis no more than reason.' 'And confirmed under the Great Seal,' they proceed. 'Why, the Great Seal,' I answer them, 'is a thing which I do not keep in my pocket; but I'll do my best to fulfil your requirements!' 'Until you do,' say they,

'not a foot shall you set inside our gates. You may even march back by the way you came, and take your troops with you.'

"Why, then," said Captain Hamilton, "I don't desire to say a word to offend you; but they've acted exactly as I expected, and I think you'll admit, Mountjoy, that they've acted like men. Haven't they, now?"

"Like masters, rather," said he. "'Tis we that must act like men—eh, Lundy? I offered for their consideration—with the deepest respect, I assure you, not to say diffidence—that there's another to satisfy—the Lord Deputy, to wit. 'He might perhaps be so unreasonable as to look for a prisoner or two at my hands,' said I. 'Say a 'prentice boy or so, and one or two inconsiderable persons that were at the breaking-out of the riot.' 'He may whistle for them,' said they. 'Neither 'prentice nor pavior, nor any the most inconsiderable person in the city, shall he get, though he should ask for them upon his bended knees.'"

"'Tis very right of them to say so," said Lundy. "Sure, you would never expect them to disown them that were the saving of the city."

Never before had I heard Lundy speak out fairly, either on the one side or the other. I gazed at him, astonished both at his plainness and at the part he took, and, I promise you, I was not alone in my surprise. My lord broke out laughing.

"It spreads, I perceive," said he. "Lundy on the side of rebellion! 'Tis Saul among the prophets over again, only with a difference. Then, no doubt," said he, addressing Lundy, "you approved their conduct to myself at their gates this morning?"

"What was that, I pray you?" I put in, for of this we heard nothing.

"Why, a trifle!" said he, laughing—"the merest trifle! The whole point of it lies in the fact that 'twas my assistance they professed to desire, and my intercession with the Lord Deputy to arrange their affairs for them. Faith, the man that intends to arrange the affairs of Derry hath need of good gloves; he'll come by the redding-stroke, or I'll never earn my bread in the trade of a prophet. Why, all they did to me, madam, was to treat me as Antrim's proper successor. But bear in mind that they besought me to assume the office. They shut the gates in his face, and they would not open them to me; that's all. 'Stay there, good my lord,' said they, 'until you promise to

give us our own will in all things and singular that have been brought in question.' "

Captain Hamilton in his turn broke out a-laughing.

"Is it even so, Mountjoy?" said he. "Are you no better than another captain of Red-shanks, and are you come to Clonmally for sheer lack of food and shelter? How if you had found the birds flown and the nest cold?"

"Nay," said the lord, "in that case I had merely been forced to ride back again and claim them in Derry; for you shall understand that they did open to me at last, 'out of the respect which they bear to my person,' as they say. But I shall have to give way to them at last, I am assured; that grows the plainer at every conference. And this is what they are pleased to call 'making an accommodation'! I protest I never was so lessoned since my governor ceased to bear rule over me when I was a lad."

Lundy looked from one to another of us, as though about to take a plunge into unknown waters.

"Can you blame them, my lord," said he slowly, "considering what they are accused of, and the man they are to deal with behind yourself? I can't; I confess it."

"Well, I can't," said Lord Mountjoy, grown suddenly serious. "'Tis very fact that King James's subjects have need of every safeguard they can procure from his representatives when they stand accused of high treason and rebellion."

"King James's subjects!" said Colonel Lundy, with an intonation of reflection. "I wonder how long they will continue in that relation to him."

"By your leave, Colonel Lundy," said I sharply, "that is a subject I have no desire to hear inquired into at my table."

"Faith, madam, I beg your pardon," said he. "I believe I am speaking of that which is talked of freely enough at many a table where far greater loyalty is professed; but let that pass. If it be distasteful to you, I know not why we should say another word. Only 'tis matter of common report in Dublin that the King is fled from London; if he were worth the name of King, sure, he would not desert his capital without so much as a blow struck for his rights, shamefully as he hath abused them. Such conduct cannot fail to alienate many of his most devoted subjects. It hath alienated me, and I care not who knows it."

My lord looked both surprised and displeased. "Sure," said he, "there's something in the air of your house, Hamilton, that

is fatal to loyalty. First yourself, and now Lundy. It's extraordinary! How many rumours have you known, sir," said he, turning to Lundy, "that are utterly unfounded and false? This is another such, I dare be sworn."

"Dare you, my lord?" says Lundy, very coolly. "Then you dare more than I can follow you in. For where is the unlikelihood? Does your lordship recollect what was said to you a day or two ago by one of those sturdy rebels of Enniskillen—'twas your kinsman, Gustavus Hamilton," said he to my husband, "and 'twas said openly enough, since you set such store by openness. 'The King,' said my lord to him, when he claimed that Enniskillen was justified in taking up arms as well as Derry, because it was in self-defence—the King will protect you.' 'Give me leave to tell your lordship,' says he, 'that the King cannot so much as protect himself.'"

Lord Mountjoy might protest as he pleased; Colonel Lundy was not to be driven from his position. The King, if he had verily fled, had cast away the allegiance of his subjects, he declared, and the subjects were consequently free to transfer their homage to another master. Not Master Jedediah Hewson himself could have maintained the position with greater openness or with greater vigour.

"Now, Mary," said Captain Hamilton to me after they had ridden back to Derry, "see how you have misjudged Lundy! He may take a long time to make up his mind—and so indeed he doth, and I can't deny it—but once his mind is made up, can you say but he is as plain-spoken and as frank as any Protestant of us all?"

CHAPTER XIX.

AFFAIRS IN DERRY.

AFTER this visit of my Lord Mountjoy's and Colonel Lundy's, we felt assured that no great severity was intended to the city for that which was past, and by consequence there seemed no reason why we should tarry longer at Cloncallly. To Derry therefore we went, and found ourselves set down, as it were, in the vortex of a whirlpool. The difference was marvellous. 'Tis true that at Cloncallly we seemed to ourselves to be well within the current; our thoughts were all wrapt up in the city's doings, and we had news from thence almost every day. But now we found it was but a remote cove, where scarce a breath or a swirl betokened the rush of events. We came forth from it, and were bewildered at the boiling flood.

At Cloncallly every one, high and low, desired to hear all that was going on, and took a keen interest therein; but at Derry the very street urchins felt themselves competent to settle the affairs of the nation. When friend met friend, it was not of each other's welfare they inquired, but whether there was more news from England or from Dublin; or "Have you heard the latest thing from Enniskillen?" or "Do you know what is the last proposal my Lord Mountjoy hath made to the Town Council?" There was not a pennyworth of goods bought or sold but to a commentary on the actions of the men that were in power. If any one of these walked in the street, his name buzzed from mouth to mouth; and every head turned to look at him, perhaps with respect, perhaps with derision, according to the opinion they held of his loyalty to the cause. If his ears were sharp, he might hear his actions discussed as freely—ay, and very often with as much discernment—

as if his critics were his colleagues at the council-table ; and every ragged fellow claimed his right to think and speak on every subject that touched the cause as freely as his masters.

The cause was become an idol ; 'twas regarded by all, from the rulers to the rabble, with a passion of devotion. Never a man would have grudged his life in its service, or have held it as more than his bare duty to cast that away, if by so doing he could further it. 'Twas a right soldier-like temper, and if, as I have heard it said of late, it was nothing but fear in masquerade, then never, sure, was fear so nobly disguised. Sure, 'twas cousin-german to that sublime fear which is the beginning of wisdom.

It was only needful to come within the city gates to be caught in the whirl. I had grown proud of my citizenship before I alighted at my own door, I believe ; by the time I had been half an hour in the house, I was an enthusiast like the rest. Rosa was there to receive me, and I think we compared the growth of our sons to the tune of "What's a-doing in the council ?" that the boys in the street had set us. I had come into Derry unwillingly enough, but once within the walls, I found my place ready for me, and was glad to be in it.

A little to my surprise, my dear father was one of the first to welcome me back. His temper is none of the gentlest, and I looked to find me in disgrace, because I had rejected his offer of a home. Nothing of the sort. It was plain from his first word of greeting that Captain Hamilton and I were high in his favour, for he gave me the title of "dear child," which from him is as much as multiplied endearments from most men. To my husband he spoke with more heartiness than I had heard him for years.

"Is this wise of you, James ?" said he—"a man with a price upon his head to put himself in the power of them he's opposed to without the least necessity ?"

"In their power, did you say ?" said Captain Hamilton, laughing. "I was but now trying to imagine what kind of bodyguard I should raise by a cry for help. 'Twould be the wars of Troy over again if any tried to take me out of Derry in its present temper."

"That is true enough," said my father. "One that hath put his neck in jeopardy for the sake of the cause is a veritable hero at the present moment ; but yet there's little use in thrusting yourself into the very path of one that may deem it his duty to

secure you ; and a riot to rescue you might break up our negotiations in the very moment of settlement."

"You may keep your mind at ease on that score, I assure you, sir," said Captain Hamilton ; "I am but one of a crowd since the whole of Derry joined me. What I did, they did ; and if I deserve the credit of a hero, they deserve no less. I was broke for refusing to admit Papists into my company ; they've done exactly the same thing, on a greater scale. If they're to get off scot-free for it, it's like I shall fare no worse."

"Still the same James Hamilton, I see," said my father, trying to throw a tone of disappointment into his voice, but with a ray of pleasure in the eyes that contradicted it. "I never yet knew you to do anything that merited praise—or to run into anything that was worth the name of danger."

"And that, sure," said Captain Hamilton, feigning to take his meaning according to the letter, "is an argument of the folly of being anxious for my safety !"

'Twas a pleasure of the purest to find my father thus reconciled to us. All offences that Captain Hamilton had given him in former days, it was plain, were clean wiped out by his action in the matter of the Papist levies. He that had suffered for the cause, was he not a friend to every man that had it at heart ?

Not quite, we found out later. For Mr. Jedediah Hewson came likewise to welcome us to the city ; only it was blame, as usual, that he had upon his lips.

"So, madam, here you are, it seems," said he severely, "after your contempt of your good father's hospitality, which he offered you by my mouth."

"You should be thankful she declined the offer, sir," said my husband mighty gravely. "You don't know the vixen and Termagant she is become since her marriage, by dint of tyrannising constantly over her obedient husband and humble servant."

"'Tis nothing to boast of, sir," said he, "however true it may be. Nor is it a proper thing to call a woman that is a professed Christian,—of a sort—by the name of a heathen demon, give me leave to say."

He hath a trick most vexing to the temper, of taking in earnest that which is said in jest. I thought it no small proof of my meekness that I let pass, without a word of comment, both my husband's merry slander and his belief in it.

"I accept your rebuke, sir," said Captain Hamilton, with

twinkling eyes. "But at the same time I must tell you that I am surprised you are so little grateful for your escape. You don't know what you are spared, good Mr. Hewson. You'd have been at bare steel with her by the end of the first week; you'd have been glad to enlist among Antrim's Red-shanks by the second, merely for the sake of peace!"

"Sir, I perceive you are still a scoffer," said Mr. Hewson bitterly. "Doubtless you think the position you stand in gives you a licence. The protomartyr of this quarrel! and one of our deliverers! ay, sir, you may well stare, but 'tis so men hold you. Give me leave to tell you, sir, that the Lord is not so bare of weapons in His armoury as we of Derry, that He should be forced to save us by means of such as you. Had I my will, never an Episcopalian should lift sword in our defence; no, nor any man that has not taken the Covenant."

And with that, he turned his back and left us without leave-taking, which is another of his habits when aught hath ruffled him. Dear! how every tone and every gesture recalled the man to my knowledge, as I had daily seen him in my father's house before I left it.

Captain Hamilton looked at me, his eyes brimming half with laughter and half with astonishment.

"The man's stark mad!" said he. "But at least we are rid of him for once and good; and that, as he himself would say, is matter for profound thankfulness."

"Then we must needs keep away from my father's house," said I. "For there his place is now, as it used to be, by the chimney-corner in winter and by the window in summer."

Every one of the friends that came to bid us welcome was in the same tale as my father, about the danger Captain Hamilton ran by putting his head into the lion's den. Captain Browning, who came with greeting and farewell together on his lips, being in the very article of setting sail for Scotland to buy provisions; Captain Ash, his kinsman, who accompanied him; Horace Kennedy; my brother Wamphray—every one asked him the same question: "Are you doing what is wise to be here?" On Sunday, after service, Mr. Phillips came to us in the porch of the cathedral, and spoke to him almost in the very words my father had used; which Captain Hamilton answered in much the same fashion.

"I fear, sir, that you are over-confident," said Mr. Phillips

to him. "Were I in your shoes, I should think myself safe nowhere, save with the heads of the party, or else out of the country."

"But, sir," said I, speaking the wish of my heart to one that I knew had all the will to further it, "with this talk of a general pardon to all the men of Derry, were he not best to stay where he is and cast in his lot with them? What's to hinder his name from being slipped in among the rest?"

"Why, my pretty mistress," said our neighbour, "I believe I speak no secret when I say it hath been tried. My lord, I know, is favourable, but for some reason he dares not be seen in it. Perhaps there is some hostile influence at work, I know not; but it's not of the least use to name him to the Lord Deputy. Colonel Lundy told me so himself."

"Colonel Lundy told you so!" I repeated, with a sinking of the heart. After the unreserved way in which Lundy had put himself in our power at Cloncall, I felt it a kind of treason to doubt him any longer; but 'twas no easy matter to help it, when so many things that were sorry hearing came to me in his name.

"Colonel Lundy? Yes," said Mr. Phillips. "He's a good enough friend to Hamilton, isn't he?"

"Certainly, sir," said my husband frankly. "I've no reason to doubt it."

I tried to repeat his words, but they stuck in my throat in my own despite. And yet I desired to think well of Lundy at that time, and, what is more, I desired to avoid angering Captain Hamilton. He came as near being downright angry with me for this piece of hesitation as ever he was in his life; but neither then, when I wished to make my peace with him, nor at this time, to Mr. Phillips, could I bring myself to say that I trusted Colonel Lundy.

The affairs of Derry hung long in the settling; but settled they were at last, and that to the satisfaction of all parties. As to the articles that were finally agreed to, there is little need for me to recite them at length; sure, the very scavengers had them by heart before greater things took their place. Suffice it to say that the town had all it had stood out for—both safety and honour. Two-thirds of my lord's regiment, including all the new-leaved men, were to be sent back to Dublin, neither having showed face in Derry nor struck stroke against it. The rest, being all Protestants and all friends, were to all intents and purposes incorporated

with the City Guard, so that they became our defenders instead of our custodians. The General Pardon was duly promised, with confirmation under the Great Seal, as required. If my lord had it not *in his pocket*, it seemed that his word had power to call it forth from its receptacle, wherever that was. And for the performance of that and other promises, my lord's two sons were left hostages, while he himself rid first to Enniskillen to pacify that place, and then to Dublin, to ensure the redemption of his pledges.

What could the city desire more? one may well inquire. Why, nothing! the headmen of the city would have been prompt to answer, had the question been put to them at that time—nothing, save security that the Lord Deputy would duly perform that which had been promised in his name by his accredited envoy.

Well, and for security, one might go on to ask, had we not good hostages, in the persons of my Lord Mountjoy's two sons that I spoke of but a minute ago? No doubt, had the Lord Deputy been anybody else under the sun, that had seemed sufficient warrantice to reasonable men of all sides. But "lying Dick Talbot," was he not known among us? Why, the mere fact that a promise had been made in his name to them he counted rebels, was it not like to be a temptation to him to go counter to it? And as to hostages, was he one to be tender of their lives? Were they the sons of his dearest friend (and we shortly had reason to know that he held the Lord Mountjoy far otherwise), would he hesitate to sacrifice them if care of them should be any curb upon his plans?

Thus, my lord Viscount had no sooner turned his back upon us, than news began to come in from all sides that was enough to disquiet the babes in their cradles and the dead in their graves. Potents issued to all the notable Papists in the kingdom to levy Irish troops to the very utmost of their ability, the captains to pay nothing for their commissions, but, instead, to support their men for three months at their own expense. Many a man was dull enough to laugh at that provision when he heard it, knowing that it was more than the most of these fine captains could do to support themselves. In a very few days they were laughing, as the vulgar saying hath it, *on the other side of their mouths*. For, as they might have known at the first hearing of it, they that had no means of their own to subsist their companies were nothing loath to subsist them on the means of their neighbours. The troops were Rapparees and robbers of old, near every man of them;

now they robbed with authority, having Tyrconnel's commission for it.

Nor could they now pretend the King's service as a justification, for it was everywhere known that he had fled to France. That which Colonel Lundy had told us at Cloncall as a rumour was subject of common talk through the province, and his commentary on it was likewise in the mouths of the very rabble—"If that be the quality of the King, is he one that deserves our obedience?"

The flight of the country-folk into Derry had all but ceased, when the 9th of December came and passed so harmlessly. Now it began again, like the flowing of a tide, every wave a terrified Protestant family; nor terrified only by rumour, but able to cite both date and deed of outrages enough to have raised, not terror merely, but panic. And all this, when my Lord Mountjoy had newly left us, after assuring us of security against that very thing.

But if the Lord Deputy took us for infants, to be satisfied with fair words and quieted with promises, while our ruin was evidently aimed at and openly encouraged, he was now to find out his mistake. The men of Derry were not of that tame nature at any time, that can be treated so with safety. And at this time their natural high spirit was chafed into a very fervour of mingled enthusiasm and indignation. Sure, my Lord Mountjoy knew that very well. Had Tyrconnel but waited for his report, he had never acted so like the fool in the story, that puts the lighted brand into the midst of the dry tinder.

The province of Ulster was that tinder, and burst incontinent into flame. Tyrconnel's levies were met by levies on the other side. His licensed marauders presently found the country purged of the helpless and the timid, and where they came looking for nothing but a passive prey, they found instead armed and resolute men, fully minded to defend themselves and their goods.

Captain Hamilton was not the man to sit idle at home while there was fighting around him; he had certainly been up and away to join his friends at the first rumour of it, even without being summoned. But summoned he was, and that by his good friend Sir Arthur Rawdon, a letter from whom was put into his hands on the 26th of December. It ran thus:

"Moyra, December the 24th.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"You being the man you are, I believe I shall tell you no news, or only such as you are daily looking for, when I do you

to wit of a meeting that is to be held on the 27th day of this instant month, here at my house of Moyra. Some of the chief men of the Protestant party are to be present, and matters will be handled that are of great concernment to all of us. Should this come to your hands in time, your presence and counsel will be highly esteemed by, my dear sir,

"Yours, etc., etc., etc.,

"A. RAWDON."

Upon receipt of that letter, be sure there was a sudden calling to horse and a hurried leave-taking. And I, for my part, was glad to see him depart, having by that time heard so much of the danger he ran by being in Derry, that I had begun almost to believe in it. The one thing I feared for him, and that I begged him to beware of, was that he should be led into some fresh piece of imprudence. For Sir Arthur Rawdon, as all the world knows, is a man brave far beyond the edge of rashness. What to hesitating tempers seems on the extreme verge of possibility, appears to him the most feasible thing in the world—nay, easy and ordinary. And Captain Hamilton resembles him but too closely in that. I besought him, of his love for me, to have a care.

"Why, Mary," said he, "what a little coward you are grown! Will it be possible, I wonder, to make Scotch blood comprehend that there's a time when caution is the worst of all rashness?"

"Ah!" said I, "but that's not the sort of caution that I advocate. And can I, I wonder, convince blood, as Scotch as my own, at least, that there's a kind of rashness which is *rash*?"

He laughed.

"Why, no doubt," said he; "but that, you see, is not the kind of rashness that I shall countenance."

This was a fair answer, and I laughed in my turn.

"Don't you see," he continued, "don't you know, that we have done enough already to put our necks in the noose? There's not a Rap in the country but can tell you that the penalty's no greater for stealing a sheep than for stealing a lamb."

"Oh," said I, "here's a fine ill-omened image, to be sure! Here's pretty comfort indeed for a poor woman that sees her husband about to ride away to help to organise sedition!"

"And that's a pretty word," said he, "from the mouth of the wife of Captain James Hamilton of Cloncall, the proscribed

Protestant; and the daughter of one of the most prominent Non-conformists in Derry; not to say a young lady that hath fought with her own hands in the same cause!"

"Not quite," said I, "though I own I did something very near it."

"Well," said he, "perhaps you will do it entirely before these troubles are entirely past. I little doubt but you'll have occasion, if you desire it; for all Mountjoy and his Articles. I'd give something considerable, I may tell you in confidence, to see these same Articles in Lundy's hands, duly ratified under Tyroconnel's hand and seal."

As to Lundy's part in these stirrings, it was up to this time a passive one. He encouraged all that was done by the Protestant gentry to secure themselves; but he lifted no finger to help them. And that was a thing he might have done with very good effect, being our Governor, as Lord Mountjoy's substitute, in the room of George Phillips of Newtown. There were some few of us that had been better pleased had the last-named gentleman been continued in that post, and Lundy held only his natural command of the troops. But, in truth, we were so few, and the appointment was so very natural, that we were even fain to hold our peace, and to strive to believe Lundy as good a friend to the cause as he professed himself.

We strove; and we forbore so much as to hint at any misgiving; and as to Colonel Lundy, his professions were as great as professions could well be. But there were two or three of us that found our doubts of him tough to kill. To such as had looked him fairly in the eyes, at a moment when the natural man was uppermost, confidence in Lundy was a plant of slow and delicate growth, and one that needed both care and artifice in the rearing. Mistrust of him, on the other hand, was one native to the soil, which it filled with its spreading roots. Let but the least cause in life be given, and the exotic were suddenly overrun past finding, and choked past recovery.

But yet how plain he spoke! how openly he took part with us, and that in any company! Why, I myself heard him say a thing that made me ashamed of mine own suspicious doubts. It was in my father's house on the evening of the 1st of January. Wamphray had ridden back from the conference at Moyra to summon as many men as we could get together to follow himself and Captain Hamilton to the field. Even by this time, so soon

after our arrival in Derry, 'twas become a kind of custom of mine to spend an hour in my father's house every evening; sure, I was little like to pretermitt it when there was news to be had of my husband. Presently Mr. Lundy came in, desiring Wamphray's news of the business the confederacy had in hand, and comparing it with what he had learnt from others that were come back to Derry upon the same errand. And being asked for my opinion on some point or other, I could not forbear to deplore the pass things were come to before we knew what was Tyrconnel's answer to my Lord Mountjoy. Rosa followed me in it.

"Why, 'tis none of our fault," said Colonel Lundy, with some heat. "We are put in that position that we have no choice but to take arms in our own defence. And give me leave to tell you, ladies both, that it's no bad way to secure good terms from Tyrconnel to treat with him armed. He is one that may be brought to accept that which he would hardly grant."

"Like enough," said my father approvingly. "Let him be glad to do, for his own sake, what we desire, and then there is a chance that he will not go back from his word."

"You put it exactly," responded Colonel Lundy.

Wamphray looked at him keenly.

"Have you heard who are appointed our commanders?" he asked.

"My Lord Mount-Alexander to command the forces from Down and Antrim," said Lundy, checking them off upon his fingers, "and Skeffington second to him; my Lord Kingston those of Sligo, and Chidley Coote second to him; my Lord Blaney those of Armagh and Monaghan. I haven't heard the name of his lieutenant. Is there any other chosen to command?"

"You are yourself mentioned," said Wamphray, "as the likeliest person to hold command of the forces in Derry, Tyrone, and Donegal; with a kind of general authority over the whole confederacy. Have you heard nothing of it?"

"Not a word," said Colonel Lundy composedly. "'Tis even far too high an honour for me; but in that position, should it be accorded to me, or in any other, the Confederacy may count upon my whole strength, my best efforts, in their interest."

After that, were it not a kind of slur upon one's own honesty to doubt the man? And yet I caught myself wondering if he was entirely and heartily our friend. And that there were one

or two more of my mind I knew well enough, though to name a suspicion in my father's house had been as much as my welcome there was worth.

About the middle of the month there came at last to the town my Lord Mountjoy's long-expected letter, assuring us, in the first place, of the Lord Deputy's acceptance of his articles with us, and telling us, in the second, of his mission into France to obtain the King's leave to treat with the Prince of Orange for the kingdom. As the substance of that letter leaked out, the ferment in Derry, that had been a little allayed by diverse contending interests, boiled up again as fierce as at first. And thus it happened that, meeting my cousin, Adam Murray, in the street, we fell to talking of that letter before ever we asked each other of the health of our relations. Before Adam had said ten words, I knew that he trusted Lundy as little as I.

"That letter," said he, "hath treachery upon the face of it."

"Not on the part of my Lord Mountjoy, I'm certain," said I.

"On Mountjoy's part? No," said Adam. "But he's hoodwinked, or I'm much mistaken. Why, what end is served, supposed Tyrconnel to be honest with us, by his promising through Mountjoy to ratify the Articles? None. The ratification itself might be in our hands as easy as the promise. Mountjoy hath granted us terms too favourable, and I fear he is being sent out of the way to leave Tyrconnel a free hand to crush us at his leisure."

"I like not Rice for my lord's colleague," said I.

"I think nothing of that," said Adam. "Mountjoy's letter said it was the very contrary that was thought in Dublin—that he himself was no fit colleague for Rice, and that 'twas less than courteous to send even one commissioner to the King that was not of his own faith."

"I wish they had stuck to that," said I.

Adam smiled.

"I wish no less," said he. "But, still, it's not that which disquiets me. Rice's wishes and leanings may be what they please, but Mountjoy hath weight enough to keep him straight if things be as they are represented."

"Ah," said I, "there's the point; if things be as they are represented. Where's cause to show for doubting it? None that one can see or can state. And yet—and yet—how can one *help* but doubt!"

"No cause!" said Adam. "There's cause in plenty, and fit enough to be stated, too, if there were any use in stating it. Why, the half of Mountjoy's letter was filled with that very thing; combating doubts that he saw were sure to arise. He seems perfectly sure that no trickery is intended; I would I shared his confidence, that's all."

"But, after all," said I, "we have the security of Mountjoy's faith, which is another thing than Tyrconnel's promise. He will return from France, and then he'll be to reckon with, if his agreement with us have not been carried out."

"When! *If!*" said Adam, shaking his head. "It's a long way to France, Mary. There are possibilities that one does not like to contemplate."

This was a new thought to me, and one that touched the springs of my memory. As in a picture, I saw once more the eyes of Lundy, when he had received an answer from Mountjoy at mine own table, that might be made a handle of.

"And if there's any treachery intended to my lord himself," said I, "then, mark my words, Adam, it's not Tyrconnel that is the arch-traitor, but another that hath his ear."

He looked at me strangely.

"That hath crossed my own mind, and more than once while we've been speaking," said he. "Oh, and I wish he may be as good a friend to the cause as he professes." He paused for a moment, and then went on, as one that talks to himself: "He hath given little cause for distrust that one can lay hold of. And yet I am persuaded that 'tis his own interest he desires to serve, not ours. The man's a fox, not a doubt of that. But we are no geese, to be his victims; hounds, rather, to keep him within bounds, and to protect the homesteads that are our charge."

Alas and alas! 'tis an ill omen for the homesteads when the fox is mounted on the huntsman's saddle, and hath whip and bugle given him to guide the hounds withal.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ANTRIM ASSOCIATION.

BUT to breathe a word of such a suspicion in my father's house had been, as I said, to imperil my welcome there. That, I promise you, was a thing I had no mind to risk, for there was no house in Derry where more was to be learnt of that which was a-doing either in the city or in the field. Mr. Murray, though a Nonconformist, and consequently a man who held no office in the town, was much looked up to by all sorts, and had friends among all parties. Was there a reinforcement leaving the city? 'twas odds but the officer was a friend of his, and drew rein at the door to bid him farewell. Was there a council holding? some man that had a seat at the board was sure to desire Mr. Murray's good counsel. Were there despatches sent in to Derry from the front? there was sure to be some communication directed to his hands; and he that brought it—if, as was most likely, he came straight from the Governor's house—was ready to tell over not only the tidings from the army, but all that had passed in Lundy's house as well.

Thus I came more and more to frequent my father's house, mine being floated by the fortune of war into the back-swirl of the eddy, and the news that came to it like to be both tardy and garbled. And news of the army was become a very staple of life to us stay-at-homes—as necessary as bread to eat or air to breathe.

Here it was that Mr. Skeffington found me, when at the very beginning of the campaign he rid into Derry with news of the attempt upon Lisburn, that was the first of our actions against the Catholics. He had very kindly taken charge of a letter from

Captain Hamilton to me, and it was little I heard of his talk with my father and Rosa until I finished reading that letter. I knelt down beside the fire, and, heedless of Mr. Hewson's eyes regarding me from his place—his own acknowledged place—in the opposite corner thereof, I read it through by the light of the flickering blaze.

This was the letter :

"Belfast, January the 9th, 1688.

"SWEETHEART,

"Skeffington, that rides this day to Derry (I would it were I in his place), hath promised to do you to wit of our attempt upon Lisburn and Carrickfergus, wherein, upon the whole, we have failed ; it was well planned and well begun, but was spoilt by the backwardness of the men of Belfast, that are too apt to be trimming when they should be doing. They watch the balance ; sure, they have swords in their hands, and these, well wielded, will weigh up all the lead in the world. Our army grows apace, notwithstanding ; I know one lady that will follow it every day with her prayers, specially now that it appears good likelihood of succours from England, which may enable us to hold our own with the Irish ; perhaps to turn the tables on them—who knows ?

"Leighton is sent into England with letters to the Prince, and I am ordered to go with him to buy us arms and powder. 'Tis much against my will that I depart from the air you breathe in, though there be miles betwixt us here ; nor is time allowed me to ride to Derry to take farewell of you. No matter ; 'twill be but the happier meeting when I return.

"And I would not be like these same trimmers of Belfast, who would sooner risk their treasure than themselves in defence of it. Mine, as well you know, is ever on the spot of ground that you inhabit, and 'tis hard to go without seeing that the same is safe ; but a soldier that hath his orders must not linger, and it is matter of some pride to me to be chosen for so great a trust.

"I commend you, sweetest and dearest, to the keeping of our Almighty Defence, and so farewell. That He may have you in the safety of His keeping is the prayer, mine own sweet wife [which is as much as a man can say, and worth all other terms of endearment put together],

"Of your loving husband and servant,

"JAMES HAMILTON.

"Kiss Roland for me. The things you sent me by Cargill came safe to hand, and were most welcome and most useful."

The reading of that letter carried me out from the dimly-lighted room, beyond the city wall, to the camp, and the open sea, and the English coast. Back to the four walls that enclosed us I came with a bound as I finished it, and the first words that fell upon mine ears were Rosa's.

"Then bad's the best of your news, Mr. Skeffington," said she.

"Sure, not altogether," said I to myself, for if he were sent far away from me, at least he was put in the position of trust that was his due.

"I marvel that you will say so, Mrs. Murray," said Mr. Skeffington in reply to her, and a little beside my thought. "They're mixed, at the worst, and hope is the chief ingredient of the mixture. We won at Lisburn, if the rest of the project failed, and even so a third of their men, or near it, have come over to us since the attempt. We shall be victors in the end; never doubt it."

So 'twas the general business they were upon, not that particular one that had filled all my sky for the moment. "What a fool I am!" I said to myself. And the eyes of Mr. Hewson, meeting mine at that moment, affirmed my verdict, with enlargements.

"Besides," Mr. Skeffington continued, "we are hardly come to actual warfare yet. Friday's affair was more in the nature of persuasion than of compulsion—a declaration of our determination to defend ourselves rather than the opening of a vigorous campaign. And—a word in your ear—'tis more than likely that the demonstration may prove all that is necessary. Tyrconnel is none so ready to meet us, even with all the advantage he hath. And why, I pray you? Why, but because even he begins to see that the best thing he can do is to make terms with the Prince of Orange peaceably."

"Under your favour, Mr. Skeffington, I doubt that hugely," said Mr. Murray. "The Lord Deputy is one whose intentions cannot be gauged by his professions, remember that; no, nor by the minds of honest men at all, I believe. I would not advise that guile should be met with guile, but assuredly it should be met with the most guarded carefulness."

"Set a thief to catch a thief, you would say?" said Mr. Skeffington meditatively.

He received Mr. Murray's words with so much attention that it showed me afresh how his counsel was esteemed.

"'Be ye wiser than serpents' would be a fitter expression, sir, from the mouth of a captain in the army of the Lord," said Mr. Hewson, with severity.

"You don't go on to recommend the harmlessness of the dove, sir, I perceive," said Mr. Skeffington, laughing.

"'Tis the wrong time for it," said Mr. Murray gravely. "Take my word for it, sir, there is no surer way to provoke violence than to show yourselves unprepared to repel it, nor no better way to preserve that same harmlessness than to show the serpent his fangs are outmatched should you be put to using yours."

"Then, 'tis set a thief to catch a thief, after all, with the deepest respect to Mr. Hewson," said Mr. Skeffington, rising to go. "But where are we to find a serpent for the office? We be all good men and true on our side, I am well assured."

So they thought at that time, both soldiers and citizens. There be men in plenty that will tell you now they suspected Lundy from the first; if that be true, I have no more to say than that they showed a singular great talent for concealing their suspicions. When he was named Commander-in-Chief of the Protestant forces in the North—the Lords Mount-Alexander, Blaney, and Kingston, and Sir Arthur Rawdon, all agreeing to submit to him as the central authority—was there a voice lifted against it? Not one; the appointment was well received everywhere and by all sorts.

Nay, was not I myself all but publicly reprov'd by George Phillips the Sunday next after Mr. Skeffington brought the news into town of that very attempt upon Carrickfergus that I have just recounted? We were gathered in little groups in the churchyard after service to discuss it; 'twas a habit we were fallen into about that time of gathering in little knots at that place and time to talk over the affairs of the nation. The tidings of our failure in that first attempt was ill received upon the whole, and there arose such a chorus of expressions of confidence in Lundy—"Lundy would have done this," "Lundy will now do that," and "Had Lundy been in the field there had been another tale to tell"—that to one who remembered that Lundy had as yet done not'ing at all, save to sit at home in quiet, it became ridiculous.

"Why, so he will, no doubt," I let slip in mere carelessness, "if he be as good a friend to us as he professes."

Every face turned to me with a different depth of wonder printed on it.

"Have you any cause to doubt him?" Mr. Phillips asked me.

"Why, no," I found myself obliged to answer; "none that I can mention, or that is worth the stating."

He bowed with a grave countenance. But as we were dispersing he came to my side, and "Madam," says he, in a tone of voice that was meant for mine ear only, "so old a friend as I am may perhaps be pardoned if he offers a suggestion that you may think a bold one."

"I beg you'll make it," I replied, knowing well what he was about to say.

"Well, then," said he, "a suspicion that rests upon so slight a cause that it can't be stated is a suspicion that its hardly wise to glance at, even in private talk."

I had done it in public, and could have bitten the foolish tongue that had earned me blame from a man whose esteem I valued.

This was the temper of the town with respect to Lundy in the middle of January, but a month later it was greatly changed. By that time there were many whose faces grew as long at the mention of his name as mine had done in January; and there were some that stuck not to mutter a prayer for his honesty, that was much like a curse in disguise. Little marvel! There is no man, I suppose, that can always be acting, and Lundy had once or twice permitted his mask of dove to slip aside and the serpent below to peep out. As, for instance, when he issued his proclamation discharging the city bands from keeping guard with his own soldiers, and their own officers from bearing command over them, a thing which cost him the allegiance of many that before it would have answered for his honesty with their lives.

But even after that the balance of opinion among the leaders continued in his favour; pity alike and marvel that it was so. When I look back upon the whole events of that gloomy winter—the soddenest I can remember, and as gloomy and depressing in its events as in its weather—it is hard to believe that the gentry of Ulster endured his authority till the end of it. Yet they did so, well-nigh to their ruin.

Do but think of it. 'Twas one disaster on the back of another,

one discouragement following on the heels of the last. From that attempt upon Lisburn—that I have just related—to the last engagement at Claudy Ford before the investment, was there one affair that was well managed? Was there one wherein we were fairly matched and fairly worsted? Not one.

Everywhere in the province single parties of our men beat equal or greater numbers of the Raps and Ultoghs they were opposed to; could have beaten them, as Sir Arthur ("the Cock of the North," as they called him) put it to me, with one hand. But yet throughout the province we made no ground, even before Richard Hamilton came against us. After his coming, it was dead leaves before the wind we were like. Driven from one post to another back upon our places of strength, and then back again from these upon the central fortress of Derry, often without a blow struck or a shot fired, so that it began to appear as though the very name of an army was more than we had heart to withstand. And for all this who was mainly to blame?

Ask any man in the kingdom to-day, and he will be at no loss for his answer. If he be one that loves fair dealing, he will not seek to disguise the fact that the Consult at Hillsborough were over-confident, both in their own power and in Tyrconnel's fear of them, so that they neglected many precautions they should have taken good heed to. But neither can he hide the other certainty, that for one mischance that over-confidence led to, twenty were caused by sheer base treachery—he that had undertaken to lead them, leading them, not merely astray, but of set purpose into the toils of the enemy.

Ask Sir Arthur Rawdon else; he who made efforts almost more than human to get men together in competent numbers in the places where they were like to be needed, and at the end was left with four or five hundred men at Loughbricklan to face the whole bulk of Richard Hamilton's army. And when, falling back from thence upon Dromore, he was served at last with the powder and shot that had been withheld from him till he was in the very presence of the enemy, what did he find? That the bullets were unsuitable to the unsizeable arms of his men, so that they were all the same as unarmed, as well as outmatched by nearly ten to one. Is it any marvel they broke and fled? And yet Lundy scrupled not to use in Sir Arthur's hearing—as he told me with angry tears in his eyes—the insulting title of "the break of Dromore," which the enemy bestowed on his defeat.

Ask my Lord Mount-Alexander, he who would have joined Sir Arthur at Loughbricklan except for Lundy's charge that he should wait his arrival at Hillsborough, where he promised to join him with at the least a thousand men properly appointed, and a train of artillery besides. Such a reinforcement would have made victory a certainty, so that, even apart from the obedience due to the Commander-in-Chief, 'twas clearly my lord's duty to wait for them. If he waited too long, so that his forces joined Sir Arthur's only in time to retreat along with them; and if the provision he had laid up at Hillsborough for his own and Lundy's men fell into the hands of the Irish army in the very nick of their need, whose is the fault?

Ask my Lord Kingston, who was ordered by Lundy to quit Sligo and hasten to Derry, upon a lying pretext of immediate need, at the very moment when his plans were beginning to bear fruit, and his troops to be felt as a complete check upon the enemy's advance. No sooner was he out of it than they took possession; the forts that had been built and repaired to resist them became a protection to them; and the key of Connaught was in their hands. And Lord Kingston was not even permitted to enter Derry with his troops, to give a colour of reality to the pretence upon which he had been ordered out of Sligo, but left at Ballyshannon without being afforded another chance of striking a blow for the cause he had at heart.

Ask Ensign McClelland and Cornet Nicholson, who rode into Derry together to buy powder for the troops in the field, and paid for it, too, at the rate of five pounds the barrel; but never saw a grain of it from then till now, in spite of Lundy's promise to send it after them forthwith.

But why should I multiply instances? 'Tis one tale everywhere. Two things were paramount necessities to our raw and poorly-appointed men—to wit, heartening and furnishing. Did they get either from Lundy? No; but the promises of supplies and of reinforcements left purposely unfulfilled, that hope deferred might sicken the highest heart; and as to encouragement, was it not constantly told them that they were unfit to face a regular army; till, disparagement joining with actual failure to dispirit them, they began to believe it?

'Tis nothing to the purpose to urge, as I have heard it urged, that Lundy still bore King James's commission, and consequently was bound to serve him. If he was so, he was bound also to let

it be known. Cormack O'Neill bore King James's commission, too ; but he left his mayoralty of Derry and became a colonel in the Irish army. There was no uncertain ring about Nugent, neither ; nor yet about Patrick Sarsfield ; nor fifty others that I could name. The truth is, that a gentleman might be a Protestant and yet a Tory, but none could be a gentleman and yet a traitor. And what was it to entice the whole Protestant interest of the North into one ship (as one might figure it) and that ship entrusted to his pilotage ; and then to steer it straight and deliberately upon the rocks ? There never was treason but one that was blacker since the beginning of the world.

I might multiply instances by the dozen, and yet never go beyond those I heard narrated by persons concerned. But the case of Dungannon is typical, and so I give it ; the more as it was the cause of Mr. Walker's coming to Derry, a thing which turned so greatly to our help in after-days.

Dungannon is a place that was shrewdly threatened by the Irish garrison in Charlemont, so that it was thought necessary to secure it by a good garrison of its own. Accordingly it was fortified by a good number of troops under Colonel Stewart and the Rev. George Walker, Rector of Donaghmore. Early in February Mr. Walker rid to Derry to consult with Colonel Lundy about its defence, who approved and encouraged the design, and sent them two companies of his disciplined men, together with orders to collect as great a store of provision as they could ; which was done. A great stock of victual was got together, fair payment being made for all that was brought in ; and the raids of the marauders at Charlemont so well checked, that they, having no money to buy stores, and finding it impossible to take them by force as formerly, were fain to shift their quarters or to starve. In the middle of March, when Richard Hamilton's troops were driving all before them, and when a defeat of the Irish by our men had been especially valuable as putting heart into the rest, what must our Commander-in-Chief do ? What, but to send orders to the garrison at Dungannon to quit that place, and that in such haste that all their stores must be left behind. Faith and indeed ! it was no less than a godsend to the starving Papists at Charlemont, that walked in without striking a blow, and enjoyed that which to save their lives they could not have taken. Mr. Walker with his troop rid in to Derry, and to hear him, as with burning indignation and resentment he related the whole, one could not have believed

that he would ever again be upon terms with his betrayer. But behold a marvel! A little dexterous explanation given, and a little flattery applied by Lundy, and there were the two as friendly, to all seeming, as before, riding out together at Coleraine to view the shattered remains of the Protestant army.

CHAPTER XXI.

TELLS HOW MRS. HAMILTON AND OTHERS RECEIVED HAPPY NEWS
AND HARSH REBUKES.

HOWEVER sodden the weather, it cannot be always raining; there will be gleams of sunshine in the gloomiest day; and sometimes in the depth of winter there comes one that is bright with the promise of spring. And however ruthless the evil fortune, there will sometimes be happy chances. As winter cannot last for ever, so 'tis a long lane (as the proverb tells us) that hath no turning. But as there be many days compounded both of winter and spring, rain and shine by turns, so perhaps there may be chances wherein good and evil are so mixed and mingled that 'tis hard to say which hath the upper hand.

When our men began to return, by twos and threes, from their disheartening campaign, it was this last kind of chance. In that they had fared no better, was matter enough for grief; but in that they came back safe and sound, was equal matter for joy. The mind we were put into was the very match of the young spring's, that laughed and cried at once. But hope was stirring with the stirring of the sap, and, touching the balance, inclined it to the sunward side.

'Twas true that we had lost—lost battles more than one, and lost ground throughout the province. But there was one thing we had not lost—and that was heart; we were not beaten yet, nor near it. Very few of our men were killed; some were hurt, but even of wounded there were not many. Our army would quickly draw together again, and meet Richard Hamilton on more equal terms; forewarned, they tell us, is forearmed; we knew our own weaknesses, and how to take order against them, perhaps

also we knew theirs, which was more to the purpose. Soon would come the turning of the lane; soon there would be another tale to tell. And after that would follow home-comings that should have no blemish of failure on their joy.

So we told Wamphray, when he rid home much depressed, after Dromore; and he believed it, nothing loath, and was all on fire to have at the enemy once more.

"We were sold into their hands at Dromore," said he—"sold, and perhaps bought; I could well believe it. Deceived by Tyrconnel's pretence of a desire to avoid actual fighting until the King's pleasure should be known; that at the first; and afterwards betrayed—there's no other word for it—into Hamilton's hands. But you're right in saying that there will be another tale to tell next time we meet him; there will, or my name's not Wamphray Murray."

Soon after Wamphray's return, and before he had rid back to join Sir Arthur Rawdon on the Bann, there was a blither home-coming; Mr. Browning's, to wit, who came back from Scotland with a very welcome cargo of victual. It fell out, by chance, that Mrs. Browning was in my house when Margery brought in the rumour that the *Mountjoy* was in Ross's Bay. Straight she fell to wondering "was it true," her grandchild, little Mary Rankin, running up to our knees with Roland, to ask the same question of us, who knew no more than they did.

"Why," said I to Mrs. Browning, "there's one certain means to test its truth."

"Sure enough," she rejoined, laughing; "and that's as much as to say, I may go and see! I would, too, had I any one to bear me company."

"I'll do that same with pleasure," said I. "The children will be perfectly safe and happy with Margery; come, let us go at once."

No sooner said than done. In a moment we were cloaked and hooded, and the next we were making the best of our way across the Diamond and down Silver Street to the Ship Quay Gate, where we found ourselves in the midst of a small crowd of persons, desiring leave to pass out upon the same errand as our own. They were mostly persons of the baser sort, who no doubt had friends among the crew; and it did flash briskly through my mind that things were come to a pretty pass, when Mrs. Hamilton of Cloncalla, and Mrs. Browning, her friend, were mixing in such a

crowd, at such a place and such an hour—for 'twas after sunset—and that without so much as a servant at their heels to show their quality. Faith, Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Browning were soon to learn, along with others their equals and their betters, their perfect kindred with the meanest blood in Derry; and that by sharper means than a little jostling.

As to the rumour, 'twas as true as that it was spoken; for even as we came upon the quay, the *Mountjoy* was in the article of coming alongside. Her captain stood upon the poop, giving his words of command, pointing the same and directing his men with his sword, which he held bare in his hand. The next moment came the rattle and plunge of the anchor, as it was let go; and a little buzz of satisfaction ran through the crowd, a pleasant sound and a friendly. Then began a calling of greetings from the quay to the vessel and back again, that likewise was pleasant hearing. So far as I saw, there was not another person of condition on the quay but ourselves; but for all that, the crowd was composed of honest and friendly people; and I did not hesitate to ask Mrs. Browning if she had any objection to be left among them, while I went to carry the good news to Rosa; to which she answered, "No." I had, indeed, no wish to intrude upon her meeting with her husband, that five minutes more must bring to pass.

The first person I saw in my father's house was Wamphray. When Rosa came flying down the stairs to hear my news, he put his arm round her, and so they stood listening. A kind of sorry jealousy traversed my heart as I saw it. Here was Wamphray come home to his wife with honour, though unsuccessful; there on the quay was her brother, come home with both honour and success, having brought in the victual he was sent for. When was my turn coming, I wondered? When would Captain Hamilton come in to the quay, having done, I whispered to myself, not merely the thing he went to do, but something more? for it was ever his way to go beyond the thing that was asked of him, if going beyond were possible.

"Well," I said to them, having told mine errand, "I'd best be getting home now, as it seems to me."

"You deserve to be taken at your word, for that saying," said Rosa, smiling round about at each of us. "Well your know your absence would make a gap it would take much of our pleasure to fill up; but I have more than half a mind to tell you to get you

home for a kill-joy, all the same, to punish you for talking nonsense."

Her face was all aglow, her eyes alight with the pleasure of my good news; but in upon her happy voice—as if joy were a spell to conjure him up, to its own destruction—broke Mr. Hewson's stern one:

"'Tis an excellent good saying, Mrs. Murray, though I doubt you meant it but in jest, that such false speeches deserve their punishment. Ay, and they shall have it too!"—and with that word he turned a frowning countenance upon me—"they shall have it, or I am no true prophet."

For my life I could not help but quail before his face of stern authority, though I made a shift to answer him lightly.

"Methinks, sir," I told him, "you are over-hard upon a silly little saying, scarce meant in earnest."

"'Tis jesting and foolish talking, which are not convenient,'" he quoted mighty harshly. "'Tis no more than may be looked for from you, and such as you, for all that. 'Twas idle in me to chide you, for well I know that you will never amend at my reproof; but give me leave to tell you to your fair false face that falseness is never a trifle, madam, were you twice as fair as you be."

Therewith, and with a bow that condensed whole volumes of reprobation, he quitted the room. I tried to laugh, though with little mirth, for, truth to tell, his manner had daunted me for once. But Rosa was in a blaze of indignation.

"You're right, Mary," said she. "Our submission hath clean turned the man's head. What hath he to do to break out on one of us in such a manner, even if we were false in earnest? None. 'Tis we that have spoilt him, till he hath lost all idea of his place."

I thought it even but too likely; and so we rang the changes on his tyranny for a time, until, as such bubbleings of discontent had always ended, so this ended in its turn.

"He is a good man, though harsh," said Wamphray, "and we must even forgive the harshness for the sake of the goodness."

'Twas the old story, and it had been but idle breath for me to have said aught to the contrary. But I fell a-musing, why that temper of restraint and gloom should be thought more proper to human goodness than one of sweet human mirth, and for all my musing I could find no answer. No; nor have ever found one since, though 'tis often and often I have pondered the same question.

I stayed with them against my will. I was over-paid for my compliance by the sight of the very gladdest meeting that ever I was witness to. And yet scarce a word beyond the very commonplace of greeting; the sympathy between these twin souls was so perfect as to make words wholly superfluous. Scarce a caress; and yet what a light in their eyes, on their faces! the dusky room seemed brightened by it; we that stood by rejoiced in it. Never, sure, were brother and sister that loved each other more absolutely. A great thankfulness sprang up in my soul to God, that whatever pain He hath ordained in this world for discipline, He hath ordained love also, which is discipline and reward in one.

Mine own turn came next, and speedily.

"Here's Mrs. Hamilton, that ran away from me on the quay. I did not think I was such a bugbear!" said he; but there was a kindly gleam in his eyes that belied his words.

"I ran away," I said, "merely to bring Rosa the news of your return. Why should she be deprived of the pleasure of knowing it, even for a quarter of an hour?"

"It was kindly done of you," said he, releasing my hand. "And yet I warrant you had lingered, had you had the least inkling of one piece of news I bring."

At that, I promise you, the blood came burning into my cheeks.

"Out with it! hasten!" said Rosa, clasping her hands over her brother's shoulder. "Let us hear it at once, lest it lose its savour through delay."

"That it can't do," said I. And even to myself my voice sounded strangely soft as I said it—a kind of liquid joy, a kind of spoken smiling. "For there's but one article of news that would be worth the telling in the midst of such happiness, and that's the news of my husband's return. I—I see it in your eyes!" I finished, looking at him.

"So you may," said he, "for it's true;" and his kind face beamed as he said it. "I hailed a ship that we passed in the Lough; you know our mariner fashion. She comes on slowly, and no marvel; for she's deeply laden. She hails the *Jersey* frigate, of London; Captain Beverly. She's laden with powder and arms for Derry, in charge of—whom do you think?"

"Why, of Captain Hamilton of Cloncall, that went for it," said Rosa. "Whom else?"

"Of Captain James Hamilton, as sure as you've said it," said Captain Browning, radiant.

"Ah!" said Rosa, drawing a long breath; "it seemed a minute ago as though my cup of happiness were full to the brim; but I find there was room in it for another drop, and that's this." With that she cast her arms round me with a kiss; it was mine own thought of five minutes before given back to me. The gladness I had felt at her gladness, sure, she felt the same for mine. Was it not a joy as precious and as wholesome to our souls as any rod?

Straight, as that thought formed itself in my mind, broke in upon it my father's stern voice, raised in reproof of us; though sure am I there had never been a word spoken louder or livelier than was seemly.

"*Well*, young people," said he, in a tone that showed he thought it anything but well; "what means this laughing and rejoicing that I hear? Are the concerns of our Church and nation so prosperous as to warrant idle tattling and mirth?"

We drew to one side; and Rosa, with a gesture more expressive than any speech, pointed to her brother.

"Captain Browning returned safe and well!" my father continued. "I am truly glad, sir, to see you!" And here he shook hands with the newcomer warmly enough. "But I know not why your return should cause these giddy-pates to fill my house with uproar."

I was vexed beyond what I could bear in silence at being rated with a joy so very natural, as well as for a fault which we had not committed.

"Why, sir," said I—and, sure, I knew while I made it that my protest was both foolish and useless—"would you have us take the mercies of God unthankfully? I believe you are still ignorant that Mr. Browning brings the news of Captain Hamilton's speedy return."

"Does he so?" rejoined my father, with a manner I thought severer than before. "And if he does, what then? Were it not more seemly, and liker your nurture, too, that you should go into your chamber, and there thank God upon your knees for His mercies, than to go beside yourself with gladness because you have good news? Good news, forsooth! I count them but ill news, if they cause you to behave yourself like those unregenerate fools without there in the Diamond."

'Twas the noise in the Diamond, I make no doubt, that he had heard, and imputed it to us. And yet it was a chastened noise

enough—the sounds of sober reople rejoicing in all sobriety as they escorted their friends to their homes. I could not forbear a glance at Rosa. Alas ! it was a glance that said more than was safe in the presence of one that had returned to the room unnoticed.

"Pray, young mistress," broke in Mr. Hewson's grating voice, bitter with censure, "answer me one question : Are you afraid of the judgments of Heaven or no ? Is that your way of receiving your father's weighty rebuke—well merited as you must know it, in your heart—with a sneer—a sneer addressed, too, to one whom you would fain pervert from her obedience ? Nay, deny it not ; I have marked it too often."

"You are mistaken, sir," said I, as calmly as I could, for this browbeating did cause the angry colour to flame into my cheeks ; and my voice betrayed too much of what I felt, for all my governance. "Nothing was further from my wish than to sneer at anything my father said to me. I did but put to Rosa with my eyes a question that I put to him with my lips a moment before—to wit, Are we to see God merely in His stripes, and not in His kindness ? And, sir, I desire not to be uncivil to you, but *you* are none of my father ; and I think your office scarce entitles you to rebuke one that is no longer a member of your flock."

Good lack ! the fire-brand I had cast with these few words, which certainly I had done well to repress ! There was no way to appease my father's anger, but to make full submission to his minister ; and that I had so little stomach for, that I had preferred to quit his house, save for the grief it had been to my brother and sister. 'Twas their persuasion that brought Mr. Hewson to accept the very limited apology I forced myself to make, which was that, for what I had said amiss in my answer to him, I craved his pardon.

"But I beg you, of your courtesy, to understand, sir," I said to him, speaking with the most extreme gentleness I could compass, "that I cannot continue your pupil in spiritual matters. I should do you no credit, Master Hewson, nor—believe it, I pray you—would you do me any good. Each of us must follow the guidance of his own conscience. You would not, I am sure, have me do otherwise." And with that I extended my hand to him.

A little to my surprise, he took it.

"'Tis the old spirit, Mrs. Mary," said he—"the spirit I have grieved so oft to discern in you ; the spirit of self-sufficiency, of

pride, of rebellion. Well, Heaven hath its own modes of dealing with such faults. You have referred yourself to God's judgment; and if He punish not—ay, speedily and sharply—this your overconfidence—ay, and the idolatry of the creature that led to your display of it—then are my interpretations of His doings as far mistaken as you think them."

It was all but a curse; yet somehow the man's manner, which had softened marvellously after my declaration of independence, converted it from that into a warning. But at the evening holding-forth, which followed anon (Captain Browning waiting all the while for his supper), this my rebellion, as he then phrased it, was so handled that I thought Heaven had picked out, already, a weapon to chastise me withal, and a severe one, too.

But yet there was a kind of peace patched up between us, and I thought sometimes thereafter that I understood Mr. Hewson, and he me, better than we had ever done before, for so long as we had known each other.

CHAPTER XXII.

A BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT.

IF the Ides of March were Cæsar's black day, whereon he could look for nothing but evil, 'tis sure the 21st of the same month that is mine. For on that day I received the sorest disappointment than ever I abode. Ay, for all that hath come and gone since then, I rate it still as the sorest and the bitterest.

That I was up with the first streak of day on the morning after Captain Browning's return, sure it scarce needs telling; any that hath ever awaited a dear friend, and known him at the door, so to speak, would divine as much. Up I was and out, though the streets were quite still, and empty; so empty and so quiet that the steps of the watch patrolling them could be heard at a great distance. I went upon the wall at the bastion at Butcher's Gate. Thence I had the view of the river that was denied me from mine own windows; and on the river, sure enough, was that I had come out to see. There came the ship, white-sailed and stately in the spreading light; for 'twas a lovely morning. She was half-way between Culmore and the town by the time I saw her, and the spring breeze sent her bravely forward. "Why," thought I to myself, "she will be safe at anchor before breakfast-time. Who knows but Captain Hamilton may breakfast this morning at his own table? Why, scarcely," I admonished myself considerably; "he hath his command to look to." But yet the thought sent me home right speedily, to make sure of good entertainment for him, if by happy chance he should come so early.

That he did not was scarce a blemish on my expectancy, for I had thought it but barely possible; but I looked for him assuredly long before dinner, and would not stir from the house, lest he

should arrive in my absence. But dinner-time came and passed, but no James. And then my hopefulness began to merge in something that was hardly disquietude as yet, but was wonder with a dash of bitterness in it—a little uncomfortable to sit at home and muse upon.

Unwilling, therefore, to sit at home and muse, I took my little son in my hand (pleasing myself with the thought of the pleasure his father would take in seeing him so sturdy and rosy), and made my way to the quay. Margery attended us, for appearances must be kept up by daylight, howsoever glad surprise may thrust them out of sight at dusk. I smiled to myself, as we paced across the Diamond and down Silver Street, to think how we had traversed them the evening before, to say nothing of my expedition of that very morning.

The quay was so thronged that I hesitated at first to venture on it. My ship—the ship from England—lay not alongside of it, but was moored in the river a little distance from the shore. But the *Mountjoy* was moored at the quay, with half a dozen gangways between her deck and the shore; and, Lord! what a turmoil of unloading was going on! Half the town, I verily thought, was there receiving and carrying away their goods. And on the deck, nigh to the mast, stood Captain Browning, sword in hand, as I had seen him the evening before, pointing and directing therewith as need arose. 'Twas a gesture that remained upon my mind as native to him and characteristic.

He saw me at once, and came towards me.

"Well, Mrs. Hamilton," said he, "how is the Captain, and hath he gone aboard his ship again?"

"You know at least as much about it as I do," I replied, feeling all of a sudden aggrieved and slighted. "He hath not yet found time to come into the town; doubtless you have seen him; I have not."

I tried to make as though I jested, but knew it was a poor pretence that could deceive no one. Captain Browning, who had lifted Roland in his arms, set him down again; methought he had a look upon his face that was something anxious, yet he spoke cheerily.

"To be sure," said he; "and I might have known it without asking had I not been so full of mine own business. He hath a great trust committed to his care by the Government, and may not leave it, of course, till he can give it over to the person 'tis

designed for. Perhaps, Mrs. Hamilton, you would like to go aboard of the *Jersey* frigate yourself? I'll set you across in my boat in a moment, and go with you myself if you'd like my escort."

Had I had any desire to accept this offer, whereto the hindrances were more than the temptations, I had been prevented, for even as I opened my mouth to thank him for his kindness, there was a stir in the crowd behind us, and a cry that passed from mouth to mouth, "The Governor—room for the Governor!"

Sure enough, across the space between the gate and the quay came Lundy, attended by some of the chief men of the city and county; Sir Arthur Rawdon and Colonel Stewart were two of them. They looked, as I thought, both wearied and out of heart, and well might they be both. Lundy, having his attention drawn to me, stopped and spoke.

"So, Mrs. Hamilton, you are here!" said he, making a leg. And at that the rest that were of my acquaintance stepped forward, so that there was a small buzz of greeting. "I suppose," Lundy resumed, when that was over, "that you've been hearing, like the rest of us, of your husband's return, with the Lord knows what munitions of war."

At that Sir Arthur took up the word, his nostrils dilating suddenly like those of a restive horse.

"The Lord knows our need of them," said he. "'Tis the best mercy He hath sent us this month; sure am I of that."

Lundy turned to me with a light laugh.

"Heard you ever such a pother about powder and ball as these, our valiant defenders, make?" said he to me. "One might think, to hear them, that we of Derry had the whole of Ireland to stand up for."

"And have we not?" I asked, sorry in my heart that he had given such a turn to the talk, with these gentlemen standing by, who were many of them fresh from the disaster at Dromore, and the rest, no doubt, fresh from failure at some other place.

At my question Sir Arthur flashed out with his answer, the "Cock of the North" once more.

"Faith and indeed, madam! you're right," said he to me. "And faith and indeed, sir!" he repeated, turning to Lundy, "it's a pretty pother we are put into when we want these same munitions of war and can get none. Had I but powder enough, and ball sizeable to my arms, last week, it's a different account my brave fellows would have given of Richard Hamilton's."

Colonel Lundy was visibly disconcerted. Instead of replying to Sir Arthur, whose face was all in a flame as he spoke, he turned round to Captain Browning, that stood by my side.

Most of the gentlemen had greeted him as an old acquaintance, but up till this moment Colonel Lundy had taken no manner of notice of him.

"You, sir, whatever your name is," said he angrily, "why keep you such a bustle of unloading here on the quay? Can't it wait?"

My blood boiled up at his arrogance.

"Sir," I said to him, "I pray you to know Captain Browning, a kinsman of mine and Captain Hamilton's. I have already had the honour to present him to you in mine own house—twice, I think."

Colonel Lundy was off his high horse so very speedily that it almost seemed he had come by a fall.

"I beg the gentleman's pardon and yours, I'm sure, for my lack of recollection," said he, in a very altered tone. "But that hath nothing to do with the question I asked, which is—To what purpose is Captain Browning in so great haste to unload that my barge hath no room to approach?"

"I'd be grieved to interfere with your convenience, sir," said Mr. Browning very quietly, "or with the convenience of any one else, for the matter of that. As to your barge, I think you'll find her awaiting you at the steps."

Where, sure enough, she lay, and had lain for some minutes.

"When I can get at her, sir," said Lundy peevishly. "'Tis the quay, and not the water, that you obstruct in your unseemly haste."

Mr. Browning looked at him full and gravely, whereat the other dropped his eyes.

"I was about to observe, Colonel Lundy," said he, "that I see not how any haste can be too great when the enemy may be upon us any day, and Derry may have a siege to stand before we are many weeks older."

"And that's very well said, sir," remarked Sir Arthur Rawdon in a low voice, and keeping his eyes upon Lundy's face.

"A siege, sir! said he, more peevishly than before. "I marvel to hear you. Is Derry a town that could stand one, do you think?" At that some of those that were in his company cast very marked glances upon each other. Lundy, I thought,

perceived them. "Suppose she does," he resumed, after a moment's silence, "what are ye afraid of? Are you aware that our storehouses are full of provision—full, I tell you? You may even unload at your leisure, sir; we could not at present bestow another shipload of victual if we had it."

"The next, sir," said Mr. Browning, with meaning emphasis, "shall be mine own private venture, and it will be mine own private loss if it should go to waste."

Lundy tried to draw down his brows, but there was that in Mr. Browning's regard which would not be overborne, and the frown wherewith he meant to confound us changed into a scowl something wanting in dignity. He muttered something under his breath, and passed on to his barge without a word of leave-taking, so that the other gentlemen were forced to make theirs of the shortest. We stood gazing after them in silence, hearing his voice once or twice, but neither the words he spoke, nor the answers he received, till, just as they put them off the steps, Colonel Stewart's voice sounded out clearly:

"Indeed, sir, since you will ask me, I think he was in the right."

Then Captain Browning turned to me, his eyes like live coals.

"What thought you of that?" said he. "Why, 'tis treason," he continued, his indignation getting the better of his composure—"flat treason, if ever the mouth of man spoke it!—treason; he proclaimed it of himself. Heard you ever the like—to discourage the bringing of victual to the town at such a time? Holloa, men there! Work your hardest, lest the Governor lay an embargo on us before we get out our goods. Mrs. Hamilton, is the man a fool merely, think you, or the traitor he seems?"

"Are you astonished?" I asked of him, passing by the question. For the contrast between the men brought back to my mind the first time I had seen them in company together; Lundy had betrayed his true character then, though later his craft had gone nigh to make me hate myself for that I had seen, and condemn mine own eyes for their own seeing.

"You have suspected him from the first?" said Captain Browning, in answer to my question.

"At times," I answered. "The man is so finished a hypocrite that very often I have blamed myself for suspicions that now I wish I had spoken out. But strive as I might, I could never fully trust him."

"I wish the rest of us had been as clear of sight," said he ruefully.

"I wish," I rejoined, "that there be eyes enough opened even now to do any good."

It is plain that my presence on the quay saw doing none, but the contrary; and so I took my leave of him, and returned to my house, there to await my husband's leisure with what patience I could muster.

And I had need of all I could muster, truly, for the afternoon passed into evening, and the evening was falling dusk before there came a soul to my door.

Meanwhile the streets of the town were full of a growing stir; it was plain there was news abroad, for with every minute there came more people out of the houses to join those that were already talking in little groups at the doors and at the corners. And that 'it was good news was as evident, for every face beamed with satisfaction. It seemed truly as if that ship from England had brought over a cargo of happiness as well as of powder and lead, and methought that every soul in Derry was to have his ration thereof before my turn should come.

Snatches of the talk came to mine ears as I sat and watched the growing crowd. "The Prince," "The King," and "The Proclamation" were words that mingled with those I was prepared for—to wit, "powder" and "money" and "stand of arms." But the sounds of passing feet and of cheerful voices, broken now and then with distant shouts, though blending the whole into one noise, defrauded the parts of any trace of meaning. My curiosity grew with the growing crowd, till it came to so great a height that I believe I clean forgot mine own private impatience.

I had presently sent Margery out to gather tidings, but when the gathering of tidings was in question, 'twas usually hardly needful to send her. So it proved in this case, for she came at the first sound of my silver call with "great tidings" writ plain upon every inch of her face, so that I could not forbear to smile.

"What is it?" I asked her. "It's very plain you know."

"Madam," said she, half out of breath with her own eagerness, "I scarce know where to begin; there's so much to tell, and all so good. Derry's a made town, though the whole of Ireland should come against it, for there's near five hundred barrels

of powder brought over in the English ship, besides I know not how many stand of arms—some say a thousand; and money—faith, I scarce know what's the use of it when we have all it can buy without it; but, anyhow, there's money in plenty, besides the arms."

"Why, this is excellent hearing!" said I, with satisfaction tingling through my veins like wine, for was not this Captain Hamilton's doing? "Now I understand the cheery faces and voices there without in the streets."

"You'll understand them better when you've heard the whole of the news," quoth Margery; "for that's the least of it."

"Make haste with the rest, then!" said I sharply. "If that's the least of it, what, for all sakes, is the best?"

"The news of the King is sure the best," said Margery, with a little curtsey as she said the word "King," such as the Catholics use to make at the mention of the Holy Name in the Creed.

I was nothing enlightened, but only puzzled.

"What of the King?" I asked her. "There's a rumour that he hath landed at Kinsale; but that's no matter for joy, but the contrary; unless, to be sure, he hath ceded the kingdom to the Prince of Orange, as he was advised."

"Then, that's what he hath done, no doubt," said Margery, "For the Prince of Orange is Prince of Orange no longer, but King of England."

"That's an old, old story," I interrupted her impatiently.

"He's King of England, sure enough, but what is he here?"

"Why, I know not what he is to-night," said Margery; "but he'll be King here likewise to-morrow morning. For the great news is that King William and Queen Mary are to be proclaimed to-morrow at noon in the Diamond; 'tis that that hath sent the people wild with joy. Do but listen."

"Truly, now that I knew what they were shouting for, I could distinguish the words well enough. "God save the King!" that was the burden of them; "God save King William and Queen Mary!" — "God save the King and Queen!"

"That's glorious news indeed!" said I joyfully.

"Is it daddy come home?" asked little Roland, who had been gazing from one to the other of us all this time with a puzzled face.

I hesitated, scarce knowing what reply to make to the child's question. But Margery answered it straight, and so simply

that all my doubts and fears cleared away like mist before the sun.

"Why," said she, "the master must sure be at the very door by this time. They tell me he couldn't leave the ship till the Governor came to take possession of the gunnery and treasure, and the rumour goes that Colonel Lundy hath taken the oaths to William and Mary already on board of the frigate."

"He'd have to, I should think," said I, "on purpose to qualify himself to receive the stores."

"No doubt," rejoined Margery. "And, madam, every man that passes the news to his neighbours adds this, by way of conclusion: 'How well hath Captain Hamilton deserved of the town for his prosperous discharge of his errand!'"

I broke into joyous laughter.

"I can't forbear to admire your talent for news-telling, Margery," I told her, "and the art wherewith you contrived to keep back the best of the news till the last."

For was it not the best of the news for me?—to know that he had discharged his errand with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of every one concerned. Straight, as if the waiting were over, indeed, the moment I knew the cause of it, came the knock upon the door I had been listening for so long. Margery ran to open it; I, withheld by I know not what instinct, stood still where I was. But Roland ran with Margery to meet his father at the door.

With the sound of its opening I was assured of something amiss; a kind of shudder passed through me from head to foot. Angered at myself for what I took to be mere folly—a freak of the nerves worthy of some spoilt fine lady—I stepped to the door of the room, wondering a little vaguely why there was no babble of greeting without, but instead of it a kind of hush that meant——. What did it mean?

What it meant I could not see for the dusk that had fallen unnoticed while I was talking with Margery. But I heard, and that was as much as I needed. Strange—that joy must needs be witnessed to by every sense we have, but any one of them gives sufficient certitude of the reality of pain.

The voice that I heard was none of Captain Hamilton's, and though it struck on mine ear familiarly, I could not remember whose it was. But in another moment its owner was in the room beside me. There was more light there than in the passage—

enough to see his features. I recognised my visitor in one moment, and with an exclamation of relief. For it was my husband's cousin, James Hamilton also by name—Captain James Hamilton, son to my Lady Hamilton, my husband's aunt. There was nothing in his aspect that bespoke him the bearer of ill tidings.

"You seem astonished to see me, cousin," said he.

"I am," said I. "It was James that I expected. I suppose you come as his envoy?"

"Why, yes," said he, "you may put it that way. I bring you a letter from him."

"A letter!" I said, amazed. "Will he not be here to-night, then?"

"Why, hardly," said he. His voice began to have a tone of concern in it. "Sure," continued he, "you haven't been all this time in the belief that it was he that was come over in the *Jersey* frigate from England!"

"How could I think otherwise?" said I. "Was it not he that was entrusted with the errand? Is it not natural enough that he should return with the thing he went for?"

James Hamilton stood for a moment perfectly silent.

"It was," he replied presently, speaking slowly. "It was natural you should expect him instead of me—quite natural. All I wish is that I had thought of it sooner; you should have had your letter in the morning by another hand."

"Even now," I said to him, "I suppose I must be stupefied; but I scarce seem able to comprehend how you come to be put in his place."

"It's simple enough," said he, "if you will but think so. One James Hamilton—that's he—was despatched in quest of necessities of war; he went, and he procured them. But another James Hamilton hath actually brought them over; that's I, cousin, and here I am."

"You say that he went and he procured them," said I, trying to make the thing clear to mine own mind. "Why, then, hath he transferred his trust to you? Hath any harm befallen him?"

"None whatever, that I know of," said he. "Won't you read your letter, cousin?"

"I beg you will explain it to me," said I; for so dazed did I feel, that I doubted whether written characters would have any meaning to my eyes.

"Why, briefly, then, 'tis this," said he; and I could see he was

something ill at ease. "James arrived in England about the same time as Baldwin Leighton; like him, he was admitted to the presence of all the heads of the Protestant party—to Shrewsbury's, to the presence of the King himself, I was given to understand. Like Leighton's, his mission was perfectly successful; 'twas he, as I told you a minute ago, who procured the supplies that I have brought over. All of a sudden he hears in the midst of his business that a friend of his, my Lord Mountjoy, is cast into the Bastile in France upon a charge of some ancient treason to King James, which Hamilton took it into his head he could clear him of. After that—well, you know him, cousin, if any one doth. He had but one thought in his head, and that was to make the speediest of his way to Paris, to the succour of his friend. I was at hand. I bore the same name as his own. I was his kinsman, and he knew me fit to discharge his trust. So he got it made over to me, and here I am, having, I hope, done nothing to discredit his confidence."

"A moment!" said I. One expression he had used had taken my ear, and I felt that 'twas a matter of life and death to me to know everything. "You said," I continued, "that you bore the same name as my husband. What had that to do with your acceptance of his trust?"

"Why, everything," said he; but he reddened, and, in spite of the dusk, I perceived it. "The commission was made out to Captain James Hamilton, and 'tis Captain James Hamilton that hath discharged it. Where's the fault in that?"

"But let me understand," said I. "I pray you patience. I know I am dull to very blankness to-night. For you couldn't, I am sure, have taken James's commission, even though the names were the same, without the leave of the authority he had it from."

"Gad so!" said he, rather blankly. "Perhaps we acted rashly, but that's exactly what we did. 'Captain James Hamilton' was all the name that was named—no further designation of any kind. You see, he had been broke. Why should we have troubled Shrewsbury, when there was not so much as a letter to be altered?"

I found myself laughing as he finished. Certes, 'twas with anything else than mirth.

"Then 'tis desertion he is guilty of, neither more nor less," said I. "'Tis disgrace he hath earned by this business, and not credit."

"Never name it, cousin," said he earnestly. "Who is to know it but ourselves, if we keep our own counsel?"

"You, cousin," said I, "are right enough; you have done the thing you undertook. King William hath nothing to say to you, that I can see, but thanks. Nay"—for he flew into a passion of protesting—"I know it was not of that you were thinking. You meant to act the part of a true friend, and no doubt, to his mind, you've done it. But all the same, he hath earned himself disgrace, and nothing else—disgrace, and not credit."

"I know not why you will say so," said he. "Not a soul suspects but 'twas I was the right holder of the commission."

"There's not a soul in Derry," said I, "but knows it was he that went for the supplies."

"Ah!" said he, "but not one of them took it into his head to doubt me—not one. They are satisfied, and never a word will you hear about the matter, if you will but keep your own counsel, as I told you."

"It may be so," said I. "Well, you have shielded his name, cousin, and for that I thank you. But for all that, in your mind, and in mine, and in his own, I nothing doubt by this time, James Hamilton is a man that hath deserted his trust, and hath deserved, not disgrace merely——"

I stopped, unwilling to name the further penalty.

"Faith and indeed, I'm as bad as he is!" said our cousin; "for, I assure ye, I saw no harm in it."

He took his leave with these words, leaving me with my disappointment to bear, and my child to comfort, and my letter to read.

But was I not right, when I set down, in the beginning of the story of this day, that it saw the bitterest disappointment of all my life?

CHAPTER XXIII.

TELLS HOW A CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNS WAS EFFECTED.

TO comfort the child was no easy task ; for he was near heart-broken to hear that his father was neither returned nor likely to return. But sleep, that is the mightiest consoler in the world, came to the help of my poor efforts ; and by-and-by I laid his little tear-flushed face upon the pillow, his sorrow all forgot. Then I took out my letter to read it ; the first letter from Captain Hamilton I had ever laid by to wait my leisure. Now that my leisure served, I was in no great hurry to break the seal. I turned it over in my hand with a shrinking feeling, as though it were a living thing and hurtful. But at last I opened it and read it.

It gave nearly word for word the same tale as his cousin had told me an hour before ; together with such endearments as could not fail to soothe mine indignation, while they did but add new keenness to my grief. I could but marvel how a man that was so keen upon the point of honour could have stepped so far astray. For the whole compulsion was in that point of honour ; my lord, he said, was called in question for his leniency to him ; 'twas his part, especially as he had so grievously misunderstood and wronged him, to see him fully cleared. Over and over again I read one sentence that a little showed his mind.

"Mine errand," so he wrote, "suffers no detriment ; for my cousin hath the cause at heart as truly as I, and will venture himself as frankly for its sake as I could do,"

Sometimes I thought this to appear some excuse for him ; then presently it seemed none at all ; at last mine angry grief had the upper hand, so that I tore the letter into little pieces and cast it

to the winds. The happier I, had I been able so cast away with it the thought of my husband's error.

All the world knows of our proclamation of King William and Queen Mary the next day. Our good Bishop, that went to Raphoe in a pet at our resistance to the Right Divine, on the 7th of December last, was present and helped to transfer the Right Divine to a different holder. After that I suppose that his conscience and his will led him in the same straight road. A humbler individual was present likewise; to wit, Mrs. Hamilton of Cloncall, in whose ears the triumphing and rejoicing were at first something of the flattest, though for fear of grieving her friends (and in part, perhaps, for a less worthy reason) she owned it not. After a time even her moping mood became infected by the general joy; sure, it were a heart both sullen and selfish that could nurse its own pain amid the national rejoicing for a national deliverance. This was nothing less, though we garnered not its fruits so soon as we hoped.

After the proclamation, there arose a curious hitch in the proceedings. All the officers, both civil and military, were required to take the oaths to the new sovereigns, before they should receive their commissions in their names. Now, by rights, the very first to take these oaths should have been our worshipful Governor, Colonel Lundy; but Colonel Lundy took them not at all, that I could see, though he read his commission, and seemed very active in helping to swear the rest. The people were not slow to notice the omission, and soon there arose a clamour that the Governor had not sworn, and that the Governor must take the oaths like other folk. He answered them at some length; but only a word or two of what he said reached our ears; the people appeared still dissatisfied. After that he spoke to them again, appealing to Captain Hamilton, who stood beside him on the platform; it seemed that he confirmed what the Governor had said, and then the people were silenced. But one or two of those that were near the Governor were seen to expostulate with him. We wondered what the difficulty should be. After a time Wamphray came to us, and we asked him what it was. A small matter, he told us—merely that Lundy objected to taking the oaths twice over.

"He says," said Wamphray, "that he took them in Hamilton's cabin aboard the *Jersey*; and 'tis certain that he hath helped to swear the rest, which is a decided step enough!"

"Why, there are others here beside he that were aboard the *Jersey* last night," said I. "And they have taken the oaths this morning. Here comes one of them"—it was Sir Arthur Rawdon—"let us ask him about it."

But 'twas impossible to ask questions of Sir Arthur until we had answered his; which were a consolation to me, as showing by their tone that what our cousin had told me the day before was perfect truth; I mean, that no soul he had spoken to had suspected that he was but his kinsman's substitute, and a substitute unsanctioned by the authorities. Afterward he was ready enough to describe what had happened.

As soon as they were gone aboard of the *Jersey*, Captain Hamilton received them and showed them his letter of instructions, satisfying them, so he said, that he was the right commissioner. Lundy then immediately desired a private interview with him.

"And faith, Mrs. Hamilton," said Sir Arthur, "I was very near coming ashore to tell you we were all in error about the envoy; but I could no longer spy you on the quay; perhaps also I had no great liking for the errand, for who desires to be the bearer of unwelcome news? By-and-by, when Beverley and the rest of us had pretty well worn out our patience, Hamilton and Lundy came on deck together; and Lundy told us that he had taken the oaths to William and Mary, which Hamilton confirmed."

"But why," one of us inquired, "should that prevent him from taking them again to-day, since it would be so great a satisfaction to the whole city?"

"He hath an objection to swearing twice," said Sir Arthur, "as if, alone among all of us, swearing once were not enough to bind him."

"But you?" said Wamphray. "Sure, I saw you take them half an hour ago. Were you not sworn yesterday as well as he?"

"Not I, young gentleman," said the other. "Faith, I obeyed the Bible precept yesterday, and swore not at all. If you ask the reason, it is that the thing was never named to me. Lundy, I suppose, in a sudden passion of loyalty at the sight of his commission, went down on his knees incontinent, and would not be withhelden."

"There are a few of us," said Wamphray, "that would fain have had the evidence of our own eyes and ears to that. Perhaps you haven't observed it, but there's a doubtful ring about him now and then that's a bar to perfect confidence."

"I won't conceal from you," replied Sir Arthur, "that there have been times when I've gone very near to sharing the feeling. Did you hear of the scene at Coleraine the other day? You have? Then you know that it's pretty widely spread in certain quarters. But it would appear as though 'twas merely circumstances that deceived us. There should be no doubt about his mind after his conduct to-day."

"He hath been very active, that's certain," said Wamphray. "But, to my mind, 'tis an enthusiasm that hath been a little over-sudden in coming on."

"Why, man, have you no use of your fancy?" said the other, laughing. "I say not that his mind hath never wavered. On the contrary, I think it hath; this very sudden rapture's the proof. But can't you figure to yourself the relief of settling a wavering mind? like steadying a palsied hand. The man will be ten times more of an enthusiast now than the righteous from the beginning that needed no repentance. And now," he resumed presently, "I must even take my leave of you and get me gone."

"That's sudden," said I. "It must be pressing business, sure, that calls you from Derry to-day. Can't you stay and feast with the rest of the loyal folk?"

"I wish I could, indeed," said he. But it would argue small loyalty on my part if I did. A man must even do his work before he snatches his pleasure. Coleraine's in nothing like so prosperous a case as Derry, and I am needed there, for all so humble a creature as I am. The news of this day's doings will be as good as a thousand men to them," said he, making a movement as if he would have leapt for joy. And so took his leave indeed, and turned to go, but in a moment was again by Wamphray's side. "I would not," said he impressively, "nourish suspicions of any man's disposition that are founded on what is past and gone, much less of a general's. Why, a general, if he have any talent, is bound to have his secret plans and projects, which if declared are frustrate at once. Why, man, don't I know it by myself? 'Tis the very mark of your raw undrilled men that they will still be trying to thrust themselves into the councils of their officers."

"Meaning Lundy by the General, and myself by the raw undrilled recruit?" asked Wamphray, laughing.

"No offence, I hope?" said Sir Arthur.

"None in the world," said Wamphray, "save that I can't help

thinking that a man should show something of generalship, if he desires confidence like that you speak of."

"No doubt," said the other. "But yet, luck's a lottery, and 'tis no more than decent to give him a fair chance."

After that he got himself gone in good earnest. The good news from England had been a very medicine to him; he looked another man than the Sir Arthur that had spoken to me on the ship-quay the evening before. The old fire was in his eye, the old life in his steps. It was the old Sir Arthur, ready to make of hardship a jest, and of defeat a stepping-stone to victory, that left us that day in the Diamond of Derry.

Could I but show the likeness of the same man as we saw him next, less than three weeks after, 'twere a livelier picture of what had passed in the meantime than if I should take every day separately and describe its sufferings from dawn to dawn; for night brought neither rest nor refreshment to the watchers of the Bann. When two or three thousand men attempt the work of a great army, sure the best of everything should be placed at their service. Encouragement should be lavished on them; if supplies be in the country, they are entitled to the first of them. But in the case of our poor, gallant, ill-starred little army, the clean contrary was the treatment they met with. Half armed, and not half fed, nor nothing near it; without shelter of any kind, save what the bare March trees and hedges afforded them; so few considering their task, that rest was totally out of the question—what could be expected but that they should fail? Never was failure less inglorious; but yet it was failure and not success, and the Catholic army effected the passage of the river in spite of all our men could do. Then, the stimulus of hope being withdrawn from their spirits, the hardships they had suffered took effect both on these and on their health. Many died; many were so broken in health that to this day they have not recovered their strength. Sir Arthur Rawdon was no more than an example; and he was like a walking corpse for ghastliness, and like an infant for weakness, when he came back into Derry after the passage of the Bann.

The next act in the tragedy was the evacuation of Coleraine, and after that it seemed as though the whole population of the county were coming into Derry. To keep a house to one's self was out of all question. I found that I must either share mine or quit it. Either was a grief; but when a thing has to be done,

to what purpose is it to delay or to murmur? Two kind friends were equally willing to receive me and my small family—Mrs. Browning and my father. It were scarce the truth to say that the advantages of both courses were almost equally balanced; for, in truth, it was the disadvantages I found myself dwelling on, so carping was my temper grown. But after much consideration, it seemed, upon the whole, best to be in my father's house in these troublesome times, and there, in a mood so grudging that I was even ashamed of it myself, I removed upon the 7th of April; the rumours of the enemy's approach being every day more instant, brought in by the flying country-folk that took refuge in the city.

Now was the punctual moment when a skilled commander might have retrieved the fortune of the war. Our outposts, as one might express it, were all gone, taken by the enemy; Hillsborough, Dungannon, Coleraine, the whole course of the Bann—all were in their hands, together with the stores that were accumulated in the places of strength: and that was bad for us. And it were idle to deny that our men had this time lost heart, which perhaps was the worst part of their ill-fortune. But, on the other hand, the whole strength of our army was now concentrated in Derry; the Fin was yet between us and the enemy; and if our men had lost heart and health, they had gained both experience and fortitude. Any that doubts that needs but to recall them as they came in from Coleraine, every man bringing as much victual as he and his horse could carry, and having burnt all that he could not carry off, lest, falling into Hamilton's hands, it might prove help to him.

At this critical moment, what was Lundy's conduct? To hearten those that were so sorely in need of heartening? Nay, but to whisper despair in their ears, and to shout it in the public streets. To encourage them that had suffered both from hunger and exposure by the sight of those stuffed store-houses he had spoken of so lately? Nay, but to change his tale from day to day, so that at one moment he chides the newcomers for their useless pains in bringing in supplies to a town already liberally victualled for a year, and the next refuses these very men admittance to that very town upon the plea that so many mouths could not be maintained for a fortnight.

Had he offered to lead them against the enemy, sure the clamour of applause he had raised had gone near to reach their ears. Had he said, "The Fin is now our frontier line of defence; come, let

me post you in the fittest places while there's time to choose them unmolested," he had retrieved the confidence of the men, both in themselves and in him their leader. Instead, he made it his business to disperse them hither and thither, one regiment to Lifford, and another to Strabane, and others to I know not what places, whispering still despair in the ears of them and of their officers—despair and selfish prudence; so that these men, who had already ventured themselves so gallantly in their country's quarrel, began to withdraw themselves in great numbers into England and Scotland, and of those that remained, many turned their eyes thitherward, waiting but good opportunity to follow their example.

But at this moment, Providence having still a care of us, two things happened that brought into view the concern that was felt for us in England: one was the return of our trusty messenger David Cairns from thence, neither empty-handed nor depressed, but bringing tidings of ample succour already on the way to us, men and munitions both. How, think you, was he received by the men of Derry, whose worth as soldiers their Governor rated so meanly? Why, he could scarce make his way through the streets to his house, so closely was he surrounded by men hanging on his words, as though they by themselves were salvation. Many a man that began with shouting ended with a womanish sob, so closely it pleased them at the heart to have the means of warfare given them; and that at the very moment when their leader's tale was that they were trembling with anxiety to make their peace.

The next morning there was so great a shouting that it was like the proclaiming of the King and Queen a second time. And what, think you, was the cause of this tumult of joy? 'Twas a proclamation that was affixed to the door of the Diamond House, signed by all the principal men in the city, and it ran thus:

"We, the officers hereto subscribing, pursuant to a resolution taken and agreed upon at a Council of War at Londonderry held this day, do hereby mutually promise and engage to stand by each other against the common enemy; and will not leave the kingdom, nor desert the public service, until our affairs are in a settled and secure posture. And if any of us shall do the contrary, the person so leaving the kingdom, or deserting the service, without consent of a Council of War, is to be deemed a coward, and disaffected to their Majesties' service and the Protestant interest."

This was signed by above a score of the most prominent gentlemen in the place ; and it was wonderful to see the satisfaction it gave, as assuring the people of the opportunity they desired to measure themselves fairly with their opponents.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WORST OF OUR ENEMIES.

BUT though articles of war and declarations of union might be drawn up and signed, it should seem that we were none the nearer to fighting. The heart of the city seethed like a boiling cauldron in its eagerness to be doing something ; but nothing was found fit to be done by our General. On the contrary, he showed a marvellous great ingenuity in finding good reason why we should sit still and attempt nothing. The charger was full of mettle, and chafed against the bit ; but, faith, the reins were in hands both strong and cunning. Chafe as we might, he kept us well in hand.

It came to a point at last, however, as was to be expected. On the 12th of April, when there ran a rumour through the city that the enemy's ships were in the Lough, 'twas the old story ; the most excellent reasons were brought forward why nothing should be done against them. There was, indeed, but one ship in the river, Mr. Cairns's, the *Jersey* and the *Mount-joy* being both gone ; "to what purpose were it," said the Governor in council, "to venture one against a fleet ? or why should we weaken ourselves by courting a certain defeat ? 'Twas the last straw. So passionate a clamour arose, not in the council-chamber alone, but in the very streets, that he was forced to give way ; and leave being once granted to use the ship as a privateer, there was such a rush to man her as never was equalled by men in the extremity of terror flying for their lives. What these men ran to do, was to put theirs in jeopardy in defence of the cause their hearts were full of ; and with such headlong eagerness did they throng upon the quay (there being

little room in the ship, and every man desiring to be one in her crew) that some were even shouldered into the water in the crowd. The expedition came to nothing; for when our privateer came into the Lough there were no ships to be seen, the heavy wind that blew that day having driven them back. But though never a blow was struck, there was a sense of achievement felt in the town. Merely to have given a loose to the fighting spirit that was in them, and that had been so long thwarted and restrained, seemed a kind of victory, or at least an augury of victory.

Next day we had our first sight of the enemy, and a mere passing glimpse it was. They came down to the Waterside, and having got one fieldpiece into position, fired one shot at us. There were eight sakers and twelve demi-culverins on the walls of Derry, but not a single round of ammunition did our gunners possess among them to return the enemy's salute; in truth, they scarce had the time if they had had the means. The Catholic forces did but show themselves, and then departed, marching up the river in the direction of Strabane; for without boats 'twas impossible to come at us across the Foyle.

The whole town drew, as one might figure it, a long breath of readiness. Now at last there was to be an end of delay, upon whatever plausible pretext it might be urged. And, in truth, before the enemy's backs were well turned, there was a tuck of drum sent through the streets, announcing a council of war to be held forthwith, to which, 'tis scarce needful to say, that every man with the smallest title or pretension to be present crowded in, so that many had to be asked to retire to make room for those whose opinions were desired.

'Twas now the afternoon of Saturday; the enemy were upon their way to the fords of Fin, for we had seen them. Could we make haste too great to be there before them, think you? I scarce can credit mine own recollection when I remember that the hour agreed upon for the rendezvous was ten of the clock o' Monday morning. That Lundy should have proposed it is easy enough to understand, in the light of what he had done before and what he afterwards did. But that the rest should have submitted their judgment to his is more than any one can now account for or almost confess to.

To us women in the house it seemed clean incredible. With mounted messengers galloping out of all the landward gates—to Adam Murray at Culmore; to Major Crofton at Lifford; to my

Lord Kingston at Ballyshannon, where not?—it should seem as there were really an earnest readiness to be on the ground. But *Monday morning at ten of the clock!* What was the enemy to be doing in the meantime, or what should hinder them to march the poor fourteen miles to Claudy Ford, there to effect their crossing in all leisure and safety before ever a man of ours should be on the ground to do so much as forbid them?

Not a man but left the council-chamber murmuring and dissatisfied, yet nothing is more certain than that they altogether submitted themselves to Lundy's will. It should seem almost as though he possessed a spell wherewith to compel their assent to that which their better judgment condemned and could not but condemn.

The one only reason that was assigned in my hearing for a compliance so extraordinary was that it was necessary to give time for my Lord Kingston and others of our friends (that should have been posted a week before at the very places they were now to hasten to) to join us at Long-causey or at Claudy Ford. Sure, that reason contradicted itself in the very statement. An hundred resolute men on the ground are better, sure, than a thousand that are only on their way to it. And 'twas an impossibility on the face of it for the notice to reach my Lord Kingston at Ballyshannon, and he to conduct his troops to Claudy Ford between the evening of Saturday and *Monday morning at ten of the clock.*

I do think that there was in the whole of Derry but one man that sympathised with Lundy's action or would have defended it, and we discovered him by a curious chance. Our house was thrown, 'tis scarce needful to relate, into a mighty bustle of preparation, for Wamphray was to ride to Culmore immediately, with every man he could muster, to join Adam Murray, under whom he was enrolled. The men were few enough—three besides himself and no more—for the successive enlistments had drained away both my father's servants and my own. But even so there was much to be done for them and few hands to do it, our retinue of maidservants being near as shrunken as our tale of men.

Rosa and I and Margery (who in my father's house was promoted to be Mistress Margery, and set over the other maids) thought it no derogation to set our hands to the work in the scarcity of other service. The time passed quicker than we were aware of, and behold! we were found to be trenching on the hours of the Sabbath rest, as Master Hewson counts them, not being

ready to appear at the evening exercise at the usual time. He had the presumption to come himself to summon us thereto; and finding us disposed to finish the work we had in hand before we commenced our devotions, expressed his displeasure, as usual, by attributing it to the Divine mind.

"God could not," he told us, "bless an undertaking that was begun by an infringement of His law." And then went on to prophesy defeat and every kind of disaster to us at great length.

As usual, the man's arrogance and harshness became more than I could endure, and I found myself giving him a sharp answer.

"You are over-fond, sir, it seems to me," said I, "of deciding what the Almighty can and cannot do. Being Almighty, sure 'tis open to make use of us as His weapons, for all so unworthy as we be."

At that he changed the direction of his denunciations, and began to pour them out upon me, which truly he might have done until he ceased from perfect weariness, for all I cared. But Margery could not endure to hear me so berated. Presently she put in her word, and then we found, and Master Hewson found, that he had met his match for once.

"It's ill pouring water on a drowned mouse, sir," said she, burnishing briskly the while at Wamphray's harness. "If the half of what you foretell to the whole country come to pass, my mistress will be destroyed with the rest of the nation; and I scarce see how anything more can happen to her after that."

Upon that he began (willing to deprive me of my champion) to set forth my special transgressions, as he held them; but he was very speedily silenced.

"Hold your prating tongue, sir!" said she, her indignation getting the upper hand of her manners. "Even in our women's ears such folly rings false and hollow. Were the men to hear you, they would never listen to you more, even when you speak of things you understand. What! if the enemy appeared upon the Fords of Fin on the Sabbath—as sure they will—would you let them over rather than to profane it by firing upon them?"

"That would I verily," said he, "and beat them upon Monday."

"If they forbore till Monday to make an end of you," said she, with contempt in her voice and in her face. "Sure, there never was ranker folly spoken in frenzy."

Master Hewson, despairing to influence her, actually turned

away and relieved us of his presence. Rosa and I were flippant enough to make Margery our compliment of her victory.

"We must have you in the army directly," we said to her; "one that can rout Master Hewson can certainly put to flight a whole regiment of Tories."

Perhaps she thought we were laughing at her; but assuredly Mistress Margery looked not best pleased with our flattery.

Master Hewson might retire before an adversary so callous to the pretensions of his office, but he was not defeated; to the contrary, he executed a flank movement and had us all on the hip; for, our preparations being finished, and we able to appear at the exercise, he took up the controversy (as his wont was when gainsaid) and pressed his views hard upon us, going even so far as to render thanks to God that our Governor was of so pious a temper, and so resolve to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath. For once, however, he had reckoned without his host, both literally and figuratively. Margery and we—I put Margery first, as she had made herself our champion—found an unexpected ally in my father, who rated Mr. Hewson soundly for his thanksgiving as soon as the servants were gone from the room. The dispute was hot for a few moments; then Mr. Hewson withdrew silenced again, but still unconquered, for he muttered, as one that speaks to himself:

"The Lord *cannot* bless arms that are so wielded, regardless of His law."

"*Cannot* again," said I aside to Rosa, thinking myself unheard by him.

But he turned upon us fiercely.

"*Cannot*, young mistress—yes, *cannot*," said he, with bitter emphasis. "We have high authority for saying that God *cannot* be tempted with evil."

"We have equal authority for saying that 'the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,'" said my father, with a mien of authority equal to his own. I gazed at him, surprised.

"I will even go and pray for you, sir," said Mr. Hewson.

"Pray for sense, sir!" said my father sharply; much in the tone, indeed, in which he might have spoken to Wamphray, had they differed.

I drew Rosa aside, fearing lest we should smile, and be seen and rebuked; because it was an old question with us, often de-

bated, whether, if a difference should arise between his minister and himself, Mr. Murray would assert his own opinion or yield to the authority of the other.

"I scarce think," said Rosa very softly, but very merrily, "that the last word hath been said yet in this dispute."

There was little merriment either in her face or voice, however, an hour or two later, when we stood together in the doorway peering after Wamphray and his men, that were riding down the dusky street. The cressets glinted on their helmets and harness; and we could see them turn their heads for a farewell glimpse of us. Rosa leant upon my shoulder; and I knew there were tears on her cheek, though her face was turned away from me.

"Does one get hardened to these partings by custom, do you think?" said she. Her voice was a little unsteady.

"I doubt it," I replied to her; and mine own was less clear than I could have wished. "But, sure," said I, a minute later—and there was a bitter quivering in mine that I would fain have hidden, but could not—"you would never wish to keep him at home at such a time?"

She lifted her head with a movement as though she would fain have looked me in the face; but the dark forbade that, and I was grateful.

"No," said she—"oh no! that were baseness. That were a selfishness far more apt to anger God, and call down His vengeance upon us, than to prepare for their start on Saturday after sunset."

We went into the house hand-in-hand, like children, and remained so, Rosa taking her turn of being comforter, for she had partly divined my grief, and I knew it, though neither of us so much as glanced at it in our talk. Whether it was a relief to me or a pang, to be thus understood, was more than I could tell. For mine was a sorrow that could not bear the light.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RESULT OF HIS TREACHERY.

NEVER, I think, did the common every-day business of life seem so trivial as on the Monday morning. To balance hope and fear, weighing each against the other; to pour out the heart in prayer; to waste it in care that served no purpose; were the occupations in which we would have chosen to pass our time; while the battle that should determine life or death to many of us, freedom or slavery to all, was being fought out a few short miles away. That we were forced to bestir ourselves about common matters made little difference so far as our minds were concerned. At such moments the soul hath a life of its own, apart from the bodily; and every breath we draw is a prayer unspoken.

The scale wherein fear was poised outweighed the other, past all comparison, about ten of the clock. "*Ten of the clock, o' Monday morning*"; 'twas the hour set for the muster at Claudy Ford. At that punctual minute—our thoughts being there with our friends—our ears were distracted by a heavy rumbling, that came up from the streets below. I know not why, but it seemed a sound of ill augury, even when we knew not its cause. Judge if we thought it less, or better, when we found that it was made by the waggons of ammunition, which were then, at the very time appointed for the meeting, only leaving the town. We gazed upon each other with blank faces.

"Perhaps," said my father, "'tis additional supply, that the General himself is taking to the troops engaged." For Lundy himself clattered by with a small escort at the moment; they rid fast. My father's voice was husky, and trembled a little.

"Adam's troop had three rounds apiece served out to them,"

said Rosa. "I know, because Wamphray had charge of it, to take to him at Culmore."

"He rides," said my father, following Lundy with his eyes, "like a man in earnest."

"Will he be in earnest to make up for lost time, do you think?" said Rosa; I had never heard such an accent of bitterness from her lips before.

"I doubt it," said I; and then wished I had said nothing to bleach her white face whiter.

At that very minute, that fear might not utterly dishearten us, came a messenger to my father, bringing news of two English ships that were in the Lough, near to the mouth of the Foyle River, bringing strong reinforcements to us. An officer, he said, had come post-haste to offer them to Lundy, but hearing where he was gone to, and that he was just too late to find him, he had turned about and gone straight back to his commander with the account of it.

The day wore on, ever the later the wearier. We never stirred abroad, Rosa and I. We strove, indeed, to employ ourselves at our ordinary tasks; but ever and anon we found our hands fallen idle before us, and ourselves into a fit of anxious musing. The least sound in the street took us to the windows; but there was nothing to be seen or heard all morning that was of the slightest interest. About two of the clock there came another message to my father, desiring his immediate presence in the council-chamber, to receive a second messenger from the ships to the Governor. So far as actual business was concerned, he might as well have stayed at home. The few persons of importance left in Derry had been duly summoned and were duly met; but Lundy had not empowered any of them to fill his place in his absence, and consequently none of them was entitled to do so much as make an authoritative suggestion upon a matter referred to his decision.

So, at least, said the messenger, Major Tiffany, who walked home from the council-chamber with my father, there to rest and refresh himself while he waited Lundy's return to the city. A bluff, soldier-like man, we thought him, with manners that smacked more of the camp than of the castle. He would speak of nothing save the defence of the city, which, indeed, was the one subject we cared to hear of. But his views thereon were something disheartening.

"Your city, sir," said he to my father, without disguise or

softening, "is about the poorest-placed that ever I saw to stand a siege, if it should come to that."

"Why so, sir?" asked my father. "We stand upon a fair eminence, and, sure, we have as good a moat in front of us as heart can wish."

"The river, you would say," said the Major. "Why, so it is indeed—an excellent moat, if that were all that's needed. But see how ill you lie to the hills around you; they command you on every side. To artillery well posted you lie as open as though you had no wall. Why, with a good field-battery and good gunners, I'll undertake to shell you out of your city in three days;—or bury you in its ruins—which you please."

"And yet Derry stood a good siege in '42," said my father, "and, what is more, came out of it victorious."

"The enemy can't have understood their advantages, that's all," responded Major Tiffany. "There are some among King James's generals that do; I can tell you that. I don't profess to be versed in ancient history, but, if my memory serves me at all, there were no soldiers against you in the '42; nothing but wild Irishmen, with scarce any guns, and no better instruction in warfare."

"I'd like to hear you tell that to the O'Neills," said my father, a little grimly. "But if our arms be successful to-day, there may be no siege to stand."

"'Twill be ours to prevent it," said the other gallantly. "But I suppose you are aware that they're taking up their position on the other side of the river, for all that?"

Soon after that their conversation flagged, and they went out together. Master Hewson made his appearance as they left. We had seen but little of him all day, and now he took his customary seat without saying a word. I know not what wrought upon the man, but he was less sour and stern this day than ever I saw him before; methought, indeed, that I discerned a gleam of human pity in his eyes when they met mine or rested upon Rosa.

The evening began to draw down apace, and, truly, the afternoon had passed at a rate very different from the leaden morning. It could not but lighten our spirits to know of friends so near; in force to follow up our victory, if victory were ours; to help us to turn the tide, if 'twere otherwise. The same feeling was general in the town. The assurance of their Majesties' care for us was enough in itself to give confidence to the most timorous.

Towards dusk there fell gradually on the city a strange, expectant hush, the pause before the thunderclap, it proved ; or should I liken it to the shuddering chill that preceeds the snow ? For it was broken by no ringing shout of triumph, but by a weary lagging through the streets of listless, dishevelled men in straggling parties. No need to ask them how the day had gone ; 'twas writ large upon their faces in a character none could fail to read. These were men in flight, and he that led them therein was their General, Lundy.

The streets were beginning to be full of those that had gone to meet our returning soldiers, as Lundy rid up to his own door. Never a word said they, bad or good, while the beaten men were passing through ; but as Lundy came by there rose and grew a kind of inarticulate murmur of rage—a terrible sound, and one that even he could not disregard. He turned him on his horse to face the crowd, as though he would have addressed them. But there broke out a sudden storm of shouts and cries of execration, mixed with a hissing sound that was the very speech of indignation. Lundy was altogether daunted by it, and got himself into the safety of his house as speedily as he could.

But mine own attention was drawn away from the people in the street by the sound of weeping at my side.

"Courage, sweetheart," said I to Rosa, as confidently as I could. "This is but a small part of those that rid out to the muster ; the rest may have had better fortune."

"No, young mistress, nor will," said Mr. Hewson's harsh voice from the other window—"nor will, until the armies of the Lord be purged of them that are none of His men. I marvel at nothing that comes from you," he continued, stepping back from the window ; "but it doth strike me with wonder—ay, and with grief—to hear a man like your father speak as one that puts his trust in chariots and in horses. I marked him in the street with yonder ungodly soldier. I listened to their talk, though they were not aware of me. Verily, any man might think that it was from the English ships and soldiers he looked for salvation. He will see how far they will avail. In the streets I hold my peace, for there to speak out would profit nothing ; but among mine own flock I say fearlessly——"

"Oh, for pity's sake, Master Hewson, spare us your prophecies as well !" I broke in, seeing how terribly Rosa was moved by his words, and, truth to tell, not a little disappointed myself to hear

him break forth in this vein ; for, from his countenance, I had judged him a little touched with feeling of our anxiety. "For the sake of common humanity—I say not of common modesty—pretend not to lay bare the secret counsels of the Almighty, that, sure, are as little known to you as to us—but go out and fetch us news."

Mr. Hewson is like a very woman, as the scurril proverb makes us, and must ever have the last word ; but this time I let him have it with all my heart, nor even heard what it was he said. For even as I begged him to go in quest of news, I saw Mr. Murray and Major Tiffany enter the house, and knew they brought it.

The Major fell at once into a vein of condoling with us and consoling us, that was little more grateful to our ears than his former conversation upon the unfitness of the city to sustain a siege ; being coloured, as that was, by a persuasion of our inferiority to Richard Hamilton's troops, or, as I should say, King James's. For by this time it was known that King James, if he was not in person with his army, was following hard upon their heels.

"We bring you bad news, I'm grieved to say," said he to us, "the worst, in fact, though, after all, nothing more than was looked for on board when I set out. For what can you expect when raw men, that scarce have heard a gun fired in their lives, oppose themselves to regular troops ? Had your Governor but advised himself to wait until we joined him, now !"

"The enemy would have been across the Fords of Fin, all the same," said my father dryly.

"Truly ! but without defeating you," said the Major, lifting his brows, as much as to say, "Here's an example ! one that hath not the sense of warfare in him !" "Your numbers and your courage," he continued, "had still been whole to give you heart to confront them nearer home. There must be advantageous ground between this and Lifford, where you could have offered battle with a prospect of success ; as it is, your men will require the shelter of walls before you can bring them to face the King's troops again."

"The King's troops"—that was what he said ; but I know not whether any marked the word, save I.

"Sir," said Mr. Murray, "I will pardon your reflections on our courage and training, because you know nothing of either.

But you shall understand that whenever our men have been brought face to face with the Irish troops they have beaten them, if our numbers have been within one to four of theirs."

Major Tiffany gave a little mocking laugh.

"'Tis strange, then," said he; "and you'll pardon me for pointing it out to you, that you are pushed back out of all your advanced posts, even to the last of them; till now you have little more than the ground within your walls, and must needs abide a siege here, for all I can see, or else capitulate."

Mr. Murray flushed a deep red, and laid his hand upon his sword; for all he is so old and grave a man, I could see he was angered to the quick. But Mr. Hewson interposed with one of his long-winded orations, giving the Major to understand that his reasons for our misfortunes were all beside the mark, and ascribing that, himself, to the providence of God, which ought to have been laid at the door of the improvidence of man. He ended by describing our profanation—so he termed it—of the Sabbath, "which in this house at least," said he, "was wholly without excuse, they having had the ways of godliness expounded to them from their youth up. How can they expect but that God will revenge upon them their contempt of His holy ordinances?"

The Major stared at him in astonishment.

"Sir," said he, "I can scarce see you for the dusk; but it's easy enough to tell your cloth in the dark, and that agrees but poorly with soldiership. If the half of what I heard rumoured in the street be true, sir, then perhaps, if instead of stopping their preparations when they did, they had carried them on all Sunday, God might have *owned them*, as you put it, with success. I must make the best of my way to the Governor, who will by this time, no doubt, be ready to receive me. But give me leave to tell you, sir, at parting, that, to the best of my poor observation, God's providence is generally on their side that show most prudence!"

With that, Major Tiffany took his leave. My father stood still in his place for many minutes, plunged in thought. Had he been the one to answer Mr. Hewson's denunciation, I little doubt but his own good sense had led him to much the same conclusion as the Major's. But that conclusion had been put too strongly and sharply to commend itself to a mind so devout, and withal so ascetic;—it had been so put, besides, by one that had the moment before offended him deeply. He pondered it for awhile, and then

he turned to Mr. Hewson, and spoke—spoke slowly and deliberately, after his manner when his mind is thoroughly made up.

"Master Hewson," said he, "I spoke to you hastily and thoughtlessly o' Saturday night; I crave your pardon for it. The event hath proved that you were right and I—wrong." ('Twas a frank avowal, but the word came with a hesitation and a gulp.) "I was moved," he continued, "by worldly prudence; and worldly prudence in such matters is no better than folly. Henceforth, whatever may appear to be the necessity, neither I nor mine shall lift hand on the Lord's Day, to do aught that breaks upon its ordained rest."

Mr. Hewson cast up his eyes with a gesture of thanksgiving.

"Did I not say," said he, "that the Lord would purge our defenders of all that was not to His mind? The process is begun, and it may well be that He will save us with a poor three hundred and no more, as in Gideon's days."

I fell into a fit of musing that closed mine ears to the rest they said. I would fain have held my peace, but it was borne in upon me that if I did so I was bound to render obedience to my father's will in this matter. And what were that, said an inner voice in mine inner ears, but to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage that I had cast aside?

After the exercise, therefore, I opened my mind to Mr. Murray, and entreated him, with all the reverence I could show him, to hold me free from the vow he had made. He looked upon me thoughtfully for a moment; then, to my thankfulness, he allowed my request.

"I pretend to no authority over you now, Mary," said he, very deliberately. "But remember this: I made that promise for all my family. You shall do as your conscience requires of you, should difference arise; but if you go contrary to my will, you can no longer remain in my house."

He spoke without anger, and I bowed my head in assent to what he said. When Rosa and I were left together, I found to my surprise that I was trembling.

"How could you speak so, Mary?" said she. "I cannot think how you could venture to oppose your father and Mr. Hewson as you did. And, forgive me, but I see you fear them as well as I."

"Fear Master Hewson! not a whit," said I. "But I did fear—and grieve—to grieve my father."

"Yet you did it," said she gravely.

"I could not help it," I replied. "It seemed as if, unless I said what I did, I set my hand to a bond that might cost—I know not what; perhaps the dearest thing I own."

"Then, I suppose, that is what I have done," said she, thoughtfully, after a minute's silence. "No, I know what you would say," she answered to my look—I was, indeed, about to urge her to do as I had done, and claim her freedom—"but it's of no use. It seems to me to be more my duty to be guided by men so wise and good than to think for myself."

To that I had nothing to answer, and therefore held my peace. She misinterpreted my silence.

"If you think you were mistaken," said she, "sure, nothing can be easier than to take back your words."

"Nothing easier, indeed," said I, wondering a little to find myself smiling. "I am even attracted by the prospect of pleasing them both so much, Rosa, little as I believe you think it of me. But I fear I do not think I was mistaken."

She gave a quick sigh.

"I wish you did," said she, "for that's a terrible man, Mary, and I hate to hear you brave him. See how strangely his words are always justified."

"What, always?" said I; and I smiled again.

"Why, yes," said she; "I think so. He foretold us disaster on Saturday night, and it's in the very air. You yourself, now—he foretold you, that night we were so overjoyed at the news of James's return——"

She stopped there, unwilling to wound me. But she had dealt me a shrewder thrust than she knew, and one I scarce knew how to answer; for none but myself knew how deep and sore that disappointment had pierced.

It was true, besides, that once or twice a kind of loathing awe of the man's insight had oppressed me. Strange, that at my sister's words, which recalled the most extraordinary semblance of it, that shadow should pass clear off my mind, never again to vex me.

"*Overjoyed!*" I said, repeating the word she had used.

"Were we really *overjoyed*, Rosa? Consider, and tell me what you think. I'd as lief take your opinion of that matter as his."

She was silent; unable, I was assured, to approve entirely either his view or mine.

"I never can believe," said I—and with my lips upon her brow

I tried to express my pity—ay, and reverence—for the thought I could not share—"I never can believe that it is out of revenge, or out of vanity, that our heavenly Father smites us. Why, I could scarce think so meanly of Mr. Hewson himself. It is not as we punish our children, but as we teach them, that God sends pain. Believe it."

There was a little silence.

"What then?" said she, breaking it.

"Why," said I very gravely—for, indeed, there was a kind of weight of foresight on my own heart as I spoke—"we might shrink from the rod in the hand of anger, dearest Rosa, and small blame to us, that I can see. But, sure, we never could desire to escape from our lessons."

And if hereby I set my hand to a bond not far different from my father's, made an hour before, 'tis one that I hope I should not shrink to make over again; for a lesson learnt is worth some pains in the conning.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TELLS HOW NEAR OUR BETRAYER CAME TO WORKING HIS WILL.

WOULD any creature that hath ever had friends engaged in battle believe that anything could happen to draw away the mind from the remembrance of their danger? It seems scarce possible, yet it is the fact that, on the morning after Claudy Ford, it was not much the thought of our friends and their defeat that filled our heads, as that of the arrival of the English ships in the very nick of time, and the hopes they gave us of retrieving that defeat.

We were up betimes, and the day was still early when we went out—truants from home for once. For, indeed, it was more than we could endure, to sit, as it were, just within the sound of the news a-making, and yet too far away to discern what it was; to be near enough to the city's heart to share its fever, and yet not near enough to know what set it a-beating. The heart of Derry was the Diamond. We, being just round the corner in Butchers' Street, and on the way to one of the gates, could see much of what passed; but, faith, on such a day as this "much" was not enough for us; we desired to see all. Accordingly, as I said, we were out betimes, and took our way towards Captain Ash's house in the Diamond itself; there we were always sure of a welcome from the Captain himself and from Mrs. Browning, his kinswoman, who by this time was settled there with her little grand-daughter, Mary Rankin.

We were not long in finding out that it is one thing to take one's way to a place in the heart of a city that is in a fever of warlike feeling, and quite another thing to arrive thereat. No sooner were we come into the Diamond, scarce more than a dozen

steps from our own door, then we found ourselves at a standstill. All the folk in Derry, it appeared, were come together there, so that there was scarce standing-room left for us. Unless we were willing to push and jostle like any linkboy or porter, there seemed small chance that we could make our way to Captain Ash's house, near as it was.

We were wondering if there was nothing else to be done than to turn back and go home again, when a man in front of us, hearing our voices, I suppose, turned round and asked us how we did. This was Colonel Chichester, and he was going on to ask us what brought us abroad on such a morning, when there came a sound from behind us of one making his way through the crowd in a very masterful manner. It was Frank Hamilton, of Hamilton's Ban, and it was clear that whosoever stood in his way must even get out of it, and that at the best of his speed. "Room there, good people—room, if you please," was his cry. And room, sure enough, they made. Seeing us, he stopped and spoke; but his greetings to Rosa and me were of the curtest, and after them he turned to Colonel Chichester without a moment's pause, and "Chichester," says he, "why are you not at the council of war that's a-holding?"

"Because I haven't been summoned," replied the other shortly.

"Summoned!" said Frank sharply. "Are you one that will wait to be *summoned*, at a moment like this, to a council that Lundy's the president of? If you do, you are like to be left to wait as long as you will."

"Would you have me force myself upon them?" asked Colonel Chichester, speaking as sharply as Frank had done.

"Name of God, sir, certainly!" he replied, his face scarlet on the sudden. "It's our right to be present with the rest. I know not why we should wait outside till they call us in. Do you know that there's scarce a man called to it but Lundy himself and the English officers? After yesterday, too, I wonder he hath the face!"

"Don't speak of yesterday, I beg of you," exclaimed Colonel Chichester, reddening in his turn. "It makes the heart burn in my breast to think of it. If that haven't humbled him, sure there's nothing will."

"Come, then—come at once," says Frank, "before he have time to stuff the heads of the Englishmen with his cowardly treason."

"But, patience, my dear man!" said the other. "I don't like to thrust myself down the man's throat, for all that hath come and gone."

"Don't you, indeed!" said Frank savagely, quite forgetful, I believe, of our presence. "Then stay—stay, and be damned to you! I would I could stuff you down his lying throat, and choke the pair of you!"

With that he turned his back upon us all, and was gone, making his way through the crowd as he had done when we first saw him. Colonel Chichester, unable, I suppose, to brook the insult of his last words, followed him. Rosa and I were left alone. We looked at each other, and then burst into a laugh; and having begun, we laughed as merrily as ever we did in our lives, and it was strange to find how much our spirits were lightened by that laughter.

It seemed scarce possible to cross the Diamond; we turned, therefore, and went home; but on the threshold we met Margery, about to go in quest of us. She had a man with her, a servant of Sir Arthur Rawdon's; who had come, she told us, with a message from his master to Mr. Murray, begging him to go to him with the news of what was doing in the town, he being unable to stir from the house. But my father, being called away urgently, had sent Margery to desire we would go to Sir Arthur in his stead, promising to visit him himself later in the day, when the decision arrived at by the council of war should be known.

We found Sir Arthur laid upon a couch; he was fully dressed, even to his sword; but looking so ghastly ill that we ceased to marvel that he should be absent from the council-chamber. He endeavoured to rise to receive us, though it was plain to any eye, however unused to the signs of sickness, that he was wholly unfit to sustain himself upright. It was no easy task to bring him to admit as much, and resign himself to continue in the attitude in which we found him.

"You do me far too much grace," he told us, "to be my intelligencers, I lying here like a log the while; when all the men of the province, both old and young, are full of duty and business—as men should be."

"Come, now," said I, "no moping. Haven't you been busy enough for the last three or four months to have earned a rest, even if you were not forced to take it? There's not a man in Derry to-day that hath done half as much, or will make up the

difference in the next month ; so take your inaction with as good grace as you can, and let others take a share of the work—'tis their turn."

"It's sick for news you are, I believe," said Rosa. "I wish we had more to tell you—and better."

"I think my complaint is the exact opposite," said he, "and that it's sick of news I am. If you had it better, as you say, no doubt that might make a difference."

His words made some pretence of lightness, but his voice and his eyes, despondent as the sound of rain upon mown grass, betrayed how mere a pretence it was.

"But we have," said I. "There's good news this morning—the best, indeed, short of victory actually won. With the reinforcements that have arrived from England, we shall soon retrieve our failures, don't doubt it. The darkest hour, you know, is at the turn of the night."

"That's well said," he replied sadly. "And they come in good time, too ; but what reinforcements, what victory, can give back wasted lives ? I didn't altogether mean yesterday's defeat, Mrs. Hamilton, though that was heavy news enough. I have some this morning that touches me nearer the heart, I think. See that." He handed me a paper twisted and crumpled to a rag. "Edmonston's dead !" he continued, not waiting for me to open it—"dead at Culmore ; dead !—a man you might have trusted your soul with. And it's not starvation and exposure that have killed him, either, so much as grief and despair at the way things are going with us."

"Don't call his life wasted !" said I. "'Tis part of the price of the liberty of his country."

"And God knows," said he passionately, "that so the purchase is effected, I grudge the life of a comrade as little as I would my own—ay, even a comrade's like Edmonston ; never man had a better. I grudge my health as little," says he, after a pause, "though it's shattered, Aicken says, at eight-and-twenty ; as to mine estate, I'd never name it, used in the public service. But if half's true that they tell me——"

There came a knock at the door ; and being bid to enter, Colonel Chichester walked in.

"All's up, Rawdon, I fear," said he, after the shortest of greetings ; "the sooner we're out of this poor ill-fated place the better."

"What do you mean? what——" said Sir Arthur, unable to find words for his question, or perhaps, in his utter weakness, unable to bring out those he had on his tongue.

"I can't tell you," said Colonel Chichester; "save this, that Lundy's evidently determined that none of us shall enter the council-chamber till he and the English officers have finished their discussions. That speaks for itself. There were a dozen of us, or more, in the lobby, all insisting on our right of entry; but could we get in? not though we had paved the floor with gold pieces. The sentinel told us his orders were *strict*, and that the council was desired to be kept *select*."

Sir Arthur gave a curious quavering laugh, but still he said not a word.

"Select!" Colonel Chichester continued—"that was his word; heard you ever such an insult! As if men like the Hamiltons, Ponsonby, and Crofton weren't good enough company for the best that ever came out of England. I say nothing of myself, but it's news to me that where Lundy goes I'm not fit to come after him."

"But, God's patience, man! surely you weren't *turned*?" broke out Sir Arthur.

"The sentinel was armed," said Colonel Chichester, "and we were not minded to provoke a fray."

"Armed!" said Sir Arthur Rawdon, repeating that strange laughter that left his eyes like coals of fire, and his face like the face of a corpse. "Armed! I tell you, Chichester, that if I could stand upon my feet, there's no sentry on his that would keep me out of a council where I had the right to be; no, nor any dozen sentries—not while I had a sword by my side."

"Why do you say that the city's doomed," asked Rosa, "because the council is kept private? For the Governor I say nothing; but the English officers, sure, are men of honour."

"I don't know, Mrs. Murray," said Colonel Chichester moodily. "There's treachery in the air—of that I'm certain. For one thing, the sentry said I had been summoned in the morning, before the session of the council began; that was a lie on the face of it, because I never stirred from home till later than that, expecting that very message, which never came. If any one was sent with it, I doubt he had his orders to seek me where I was least likely to be found."

"How did you answer him?" asked Rosa.

“ ‘Why, if that’s the case,’ said I,” replied the Colonel, “ ‘I’m here now—let me in !’ ‘Nay,’ says he, ‘but I must first know what the Governor’s mind is now ;’ and with that goes in and leaves us all in the lobby, like so many lackeys. When he came out ’twas with ‘Nay’ on his lips. ‘The Governor,’ he said, ‘could not have the meeting interrupted, now that the business was so far advanced !’ Were you sent for, Rawdon, may I ask ?” says he, turning suddenly to Sir Arthur.

“ ‘If I had been,” said Sir Arthur, “it’s there I’d be this minute, and not here !”

“ ‘You couldn’t have walked down,” said the Colonel, “if you had been summoned a dozen times over.”

“ ‘That’s even but too certain,” said Sir Arthur ; “but I’d not have thought a bit of shame to be carried there in a litter ; no, nor to give them mine opinion lying on my back, as I am this moment. Why do you ask if I was summoned ?” he ended.

“ ‘Merely because it was given out that you were,” replied Colonel Chichester, with a smile that was of the grimmest. “I heard them saying in the lobby, as we waited—I must suppose upon Lundy’s authority—that he sent for you before the sitting began, and had for answer that you were busy dying, and couldn’t be troubled with affairs.”

Sir Arthur’s face flushed suddenly from deadly pale to red ; he blew upon his call, without replying by a word to Colonel Chichester. His servant came immediately.

“ ‘Here, you—you, Dawson,” said his master, sitting up suddenly upon his couch : “was I sent for this morning to the council ? and did you return for answer that I lay dying, and couldn’t be troubled with affairs ?”

“ ‘Never, sir ! neither came such a message, nor dared I have sent such an answer,” said the man, “without a word to you——”

But Sir Arthur, turning round to Colonel Chichester, as though he would have spoken, fell back upon his couch in a swoon that at first we took for death. And here I had occasion to admire the behaviour of Margery, who came forward out of the window where she was in waiting for us, and, tending upon Sir Arthur with promptness and skill, presently recovered him. My father entered before he had spoken, coming in compliance with the message that he had sent him—to bring the latest news. His countenance had a more satisfied look than I had seen on it for days, but it clouded as he saw Sir Arthur’s state.

"What's this?" said he, looking towards Rosa and me with severity. "What have you said to him to put him in such a taking?"

"It's none of the ladies' fault, sir, but mine," said Colonel Chichester, with contrition. "Telling him—things I had better have kept to myself. I'd never have named them if I'd thought he'd have taken them so to heart. Lie still, Rawdon," he continued authoritatively, as Sir Arthur made a motion of raising himself on his couch again—"lie still, I say. You're as unfit as a baby to be troubled about things you can't help—nor we, neither," he added, in a lower tone.

"I know not why we should talk of things we cannot help," said Mr. Murray, "when we stand in a better position than ever we have done yet, to give a good account ourselves in the face of the enemy."

"Eh, sir, what's that you say?" exclaimed the Colonel. "I would fain hear more of that. 'Twas the very contrary things looked to me when I was abroad this morning."

And Sir Arthur, finding voice in spite of the terrible exhaustion that was written on his face, begged to hear what had been fixed in the council of war.

"I was not at the council, Sir Arthur," said Mr. Murray, "nor any man I know, save Chidley Coote and Blayney."

"But these two are worth a score," murmured Sir Arthur to himself.

"But I met Lundy himself in the street as I was making my way hither," continued my father. "The streets are packed—you could scarce believe it, so empty as the town was yesterday—and we were brought to a stand close to each other, so that I had some little talk with him. He told me that the English officers were gone down to the ships to bring up their men, and that he himself was upon his way to Horace Kennedy upon the business of finding them quarters. And that," said he, looking upon Rosa and me with a perplexed face, "brings me in mind of what I was considering as I was coming to this house; which was, how I am to get you home again. I scarce believe that you could make your way through the crowd even now. But you must try it, and that without delay, for when the English troops come into town 'twill be a manifest impossibility."

We needed no second telling, feeling sure that 'twas time Sir Arthur were left to himself, but or ever we could take our leave he

had another pair of visitors. There was that in their faces that stopped us till we should hear their news. They were Captain Hugh McGill and Mr. Mogredge, the Town Clerk. The latter was evidently a stranger to Sir Arthur, for Captain McGill lost no time in presenting them to each other.

"Sir Arthur Rawdon," said Mr. Mogredge, making his leg, "I have not had the honour to be of your acquaintance hitherto, often as we have been in company together. But you are as little a stranger to me as you must be to any man that hath his country's prosperity at heart."

"You flatter me, sir," said Sir Arthur.

"I do not, indeed, sir," replied Mr. Mogredge. "And it's precisely the interest I take in your welfare that brings me into your house at this moment, when you are so very unfit to receive a stranger."

"That which is a pleasure to a man rarely harms him, sir," said Sir Arthur very civilly, "and the company of my friends is a cordial to me."

"Perhaps you're not aware, sir," said Mr. Mogredge, "that you are the only man in Derry—there are but three altogether—that is excepted by name from Tyrconnel's proclamation of pardon."

"I desire you shall understand, sir," replied the other, "that I value Tyrconnel's pardon at the same rate as his threats, and that's at naked nothing. He's perfectly welcome to hang, draw, and quarter me if he likes—*on paper*. We are done with him and his master here in Derry, sir."

"Perhaps not for ever, Sir Arthur Rawdon," said Mr. Mogredge very gravely, whereat the face of the other flushed again that vivid colour that it had done before his swoon.

"I protest I can't understand you, sir," said he, after a moment's pause. "You profess to be a lover of your country, but by your words——"

He broke off without completing his sentence.

"I am indeed a lover of my country and of her friends," said Mr. Mogredge meaningly; "and 'tis to save one of the best of them that I entreat you to take advantage of the presence of the English ships in the river and go aboard of them. I can scarce blame you, sir, if you suspect my motives; you know so little of me. But Captain McGill will bear me witness that I mean you nothing but good."

"That I will indeed," said Captain McGill heartily.

Sir Arthur looked keenly at them both.

"Be more plain, sir, I beg of you," said he, addressing Mr. Mogredge.

"I dare not, indeed, sir," said he. "But I speak from assured knowledge, believe me, when I say that this town may shortly be no place for any man that hath made himself so obnoxious to King James's Government as you have done."

At this my father struck into the conversation, speaking with that deliberate openness that lends his words such weight.

"Your words would seem to point at treachery in council, Mr. Mogredge," said he.

"Don't urge me, sir, I beg," said he. "I have said already that I dare not be more plain. I was present at the council in the mere capacity of clerk, as you know, and I can't betray their decision against their will."

"I am as much at a loss as Sir Arthur," said Mr. Murray; "for I have parted from the Governor within the hour, and he told me that the English officers were gone back to the ships to bring up their men into the town. What could be less like the return of King James to power than that?"

"Sir," said Mr. Mogredge, very much moved, "are you sure that the Governor made use of these words you've repeated?"

"Perhaps not of these very words," said Mr. Murray, "but that was certainly his meaning."

"Then may God forgive him!" said Mr. Mogredge passionately. "Since he hath told you so much, I will make bold to tell you something more, even though I violate the rules of mine office by so doing. He hath told the English officers that there is not provision in the town for ten days for the number that will be in it."

"But it's impossible, sir," exclaimed Sir Arthur. "It's not many weeks since I heard him say myself that the town was victualled for a year. It's not many days since he stated that the storehouses were filled to the doors; no room for the stuff that was wasting by the roadsides throughout the country!"

"Nevertheless he hath stated at to-day's council what I tell you," said Mr. Mogredge, "and, what is more, his word hath passed for it with the Englishmen. Added to that, they have agreed that the town's not capable of being held, lying so exposed as it doth against an enemy well provided with artillery. So you will see, Sir Arthur, you being situated as you are, that I give you

a friend's advice when I counsel you to go aboard the ships while there is time."

"You hint at a composition, sir," said Sir Arthur, as pale as he had been red a minute before.

"I dare hint at nothing, sir," said Mr. Mogredge.

"Oh, but he doth," broke in Captain McGill; "he dare not go so far as to speak it plainly out, but what else does every word he hath said point to? A composition! And how it's like to be kept by the Catholics, you know well, Sir Arthur Rawdon—you, who saw the ruffian Raps stab my dear and gallant young brother again and again with their bayonets, after he had yielded himself at their promise of quarter. Just such faith they'll keep with the rest of us. We know them of old. It is truly and indeed the advice of a friend that Mr. Mogredge gives you when he says, 'Begone out of reach of their malice while you have time and the opportunity.'"

Sir Arthur lay back on his pillow; he said not a word in reply. I looked alternately at him where he lay, and out upon the growing crowd in the streets; for, like Margery, I had withdrawn me into a window.

"If I could lift my sword!" said Sir Arthur presently, "there is not that virtue in the tongue of man that could induce me to fly while there's the least chance—or hope. Chichester, what say you?"

"Oh, I'm going," said the Colonel dryly. "I'd take my part with any man in defending a cause, as long as there was a grain of hope—or use. But I fail to see the sense of throwing away one's life when there's none."

"'Twould be criminal," said my father very deliberately, "if Sir Arthur Rawdon should throw away a life so valuable to the country as his."

At that Sir Arthur gave a low groan.

"It hath been so, indeed," said Mr. Murray, "and may well be so again; and I say you are bound to preserve it."

"Then you are going too?" said Sir Arthur, addressing him.

"I, sir? No," said Mr. Murray. "I am an old man; I shall tarry where I am and share the fate of my neighbours. My daughters, perhaps—there's none can blame a woman any more than a man sick to death, if she withdraw herself from danger—they shall be free to do as they list."

"I will stay where I am," said Rosa, who sat at his side ; and with the words she put her hand in his.

"You have faith in the cause, then?" said Sir Arthur to her.

"I have faith in God, I hope," said Rosa, with a smile that had something of the angel in it, "and would choose to abide that which He may send."

Sir Arthur gave a quick, sharp sigh.

"I repent me that I so much as thought of going," said he.

"I never thought to be shamed by women and by old men; I shall stay along with you."

"To be a care and a source of weakness to us in the struggle that's at hand!" said I from my window. I protest I never meant to say it; I was but thinking it, and out it came.

For an hundred thoughts had been seething through my head, as I stood and listened to their talk, and watched the rabble in the street. Thoughts of my husband's desertion—I compared it with the temper of some of the gentlemen I was in company with, and it seemed but venial—the fault of a nature over-generous and headstrong, contrasted with theirs that would quit their post to ensure their own safety, not to discharge a fancied debt of honour and friendship. I contrasted it again with the conduct of our chiefs that day in council, and it appeared even praiseworthy. I looked at the faces of the men in the street, so stern, so steadfast—ay, and so strong and noble, though they were but of the baser sort for the most part; and I was struck with both admiration and confidence. And then a foolish thought possessed me, that perhaps I was set here in his place, so that my faithfulness might atone for his error. I was persuaded that the struggle was nothing near finished, whatever the captains might do or think; and, like my father, I determined to stay and cast in my lot with my fellow-citizens.

Sir Arthur looked up from his couch at my words. I read his thoughts in his face, and he read mine.

"You have not lost faith in the cause, at any rate," said he.

"The contrary," said I quickly. "It's presumption, no doubt, to say it, in opposition to the opinion of so many of our leaders; but I never felt greater hope of it than at this moment. Shall I tell you what I see from this window? The people stand in the street as thick as bees a-hiving; their eyes burn steady fire; their mouths are shut, like steel traps for firmness; their hands are clenched, as though they would fight the enemy with their fists,

rather than turn their backs on them—ay, and they'd do it, too, as blithely as ever they went to a feast. I would not for all the treasure in England be the man to go out and tell them a capitulation was agreed to. I'd stake the last penny I own, that man would never stand in the safety of his house again—he'd be torn limb from limb where he stood. Now, do you despair?"

For it was borne in upon me that it was nothing but despair that was killing him, as he said it had killed Colonel Edmonston.

"I scarce can tell you," said he wearily. "If they had but the leader you speak of! I would that I were the man. But wanting him, what are they? A mere rabble—chaff, to be blown away before the wind of the Irish army!"

"I fear," said Colonel Chichester sadly, "that's but over-true an estimate." The others held their peace.

I crossed the room to the side of Sir Arthur's couch.

"You have been the man ere this," said I to him; "and you may be again, if you will but get you gone into safety, as your friends desire you. For the rest, trust in God, as my sister said. When He hath so marvellously prepared the heart of even 'the rabble,' as you call them, sure, He won't deny them a leader—'twere impiety to think so."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LAST AND WORST OF LUNDY'S TREACHERY.

EARLY the next morning Wamphray came to the house, scarce able to take pleasure in the sight of us for chafing that he had been denied speech of the Governor, to whom he bore a message from his cousin and Colonel, Adam Murray. It was so great a joy to know him alive and well, that it drove the remembrance of our misfortunes out of our heads for a time, but not for long. He himself recalled them to our minds, partly by the lowness of his spirits, and partly by his talk, that ran constantly on the defeat at Claudy Ford.

"But there's one consolation," said he, "and that is, that I've seen Adam fight—'tis a great sight. Now, how little we know a man, even an ancient comrade, until we have seen him striving in his proper calling! I've been used to think myself in some sort Adam's equal. Faith, now I know better, I assure you! I would I could think myself capable of carrying out his orders as they should be executed."

"Ah, well," said Rosa; "but you forget you're no more than a beginner in the calling that Adam has passed his youth at. You can't be expected to gather in a few weeks the experience that he hath gotten in the course of years and years."

"No," said Wamphray, "nor ever shall, even in the course of years. And if you ask the reason, it is that Adam hath the leader's gift by nature; and I, merely the follower's—if, indeed, I have that."

"I doubt this humility is too sudden to last," said Rosa, smiling. "In truth, I think it something over-strained, even as it is."

"It's a sum in the rule of three," said Wamphray. "Franky Hamilton, say, is worth ten of me in the field; Adam's worth a thousand of him. What doth that come to?"

"To an exaggeration," said I.

"Not a bit, indeed," said Wamphray quickly. "He is the eye to see, and the head to direct; we are but hands to execute—and that's not much. Had he had three hundred horse under him yesterday instead of thirty—well, there would have been another tale to tell, that's all."

"What kind of tale?" asked Rosa.

"A tale of King James's horse driven back to the very sea at Dublin, I think," said Wamphray, reddening. "Drowned in it, perhaps. We'd have driven them before us with our swords, when powder and shot gave out."

"Was it, then, the want of ammunition?" said I.

"Partly," said he; "but chiefly the utter want of any scheme of battle. We were placed altogether at random. Some say worse, that we were posted ill on purpose; and I partly believe it. For, in a random disposition, it might well have happened that some of the regiments should have been so placed as to support each other; as it was, there was nothing of the kind. Each party might fight for its own hand, Ishmael fashion; but for giving or getting assistance, it was out of the question. There was always a morass, or a hedge, or something cutting us off."

"It must have been enough to drive you mad," said I.

"It was," said he, "even to the eye of a novice. But what was that, even, compared to the order to retire, given at the very critical moment of the battle? That was enough to drive us mad indeed! Figure it! The enemy had just forded the river; they were staggering from exhaustion; they were stumbling up the bank; a single resolute charge would have driven them back into the water. And just as we are about to deliver that charge, comes the order to retire; Lundy himself, who had but newly arrived upon the scene, setting the example with a very good will."

"But, good lack!" said I, "sure you did not heed it?"

"We did, indeed, to our shame and sorrow," said he. "The very men that would have fought like lions, had they been led, ran like hares when they were led backwards. 'Twas the most disgraceful affair you can picture."

"Was it treachery indeed," said I, "or only criminal folly?"

"Treachery, past doubt," said he. "Any of us that doubted

that had our doubts set at rest when, halfway to Derry, we met the waggons of ammunition, that should have been on the ground early in the morning, going express to be booty to the enemy. That disaster was averted, by the sense of a few, much to Lundy's grief, I'll be sworn. Nor was that the worst. I dare say you know that when we came to the gates we found them shut in our faces—by the Governor's orders, they assured us. Had Hamilton's army pushed on as they should, not a man of us had been left alive o' Monday night to tell the tale I'm telling.

"But," says he presently, "I'm forgetting mine errand, which is to that same Lundy, when he will be pleased to receive me."

And so he went in search of him.

It was more than I could fathom, this of sending for orders to a man that had not only betrayed us again and again, but was known to have done so.

Whatever the reasons, Lundy had yet no mind to grant him an interview. It was some hours later that he and my father, coming to the house together, were met upon the doorstep by Mr. George Walker, the late Rector of Dungannon, who had taken a house a few doors from ours. They were fallen into talk about that very matter—of Wamphray's message and the Governor's refusal to be seen—when the man himself turned into the street. He came towards them without the least hesitation; perhaps he thought valour the better part of discretion for once; or perhaps he thought he had thrown dust in their eyes so effectually that there was nothing to be feared from their penetration. Whatever his thoughts, he saluted them with perfect self-possession, and would have passed on; but Wamphray stopped him.

"I crave your pardon, sir," said he, "for the liberty I take in speaking first, especially in the presence of my elders. But if you would be pleased to give me your answer to the paper I left at your house this morning, I'd be deeply grateful. I may tell you that I've called for it twice since then."

"All in good time, young sir," said Lundy haughtily. "I shall think the matter over in the course of the day, and if you will call upon me in the evening, I shall then have written orders ready for you to take to your Colonel."

"I must beg your indulgence, sir, if I overstep my duty," said Wamphray; "but could you not let me have them now by word of mouth? You may rely upon my absolute fidelity in repeating them."

"I'm neither accustomed nor disposed, sir," said Lundy, "to take suggestions from my inferior officers."

"Pardon me, my good sir," struck in Mr. Walker; "if the young man hath no title to offer suggestions, perhaps you will listen to one from me; and I should say, like him, that it's certainly time Captain Murray had his directions. He hath lain two nights without the city wall to my certain knowledge, sir, for we rid up to the gates together on Monday, to find them shut upon us; not a little, I may say, sir, to our astonishment."

Mr. Walker spoke with some heat; his manner betokened offended dignity, as of one that thought himself to have been treated below his consequence.

"My good sir," replied Lundy quickly, anxious to turn their minds from the main issue, "don't suppose that it cost me no pain to turn my brother officers from the gates—nothing, indeed, save the most imperative necessity would have forced me to it. But you are too good a soldier, sir, in spite of your cloth, not to see what a matter of paramount importance it is to husband the stores when a place hath a siege to stand, as in my poor opinion it doth appear that this ill-fated city must do it or else capitulate."

"In mine, sir, it appears of equal importance, at least, to husband the men," said Mr. Walker, falling straightway into the trap.

But Wamphray was more tenacious.

"All this is beside the question, gentlemen both," said he impatiently, "if you'll pardon me for saying so;—which is not what ought to have been done on Monday night, but what is best to be done to-day. Am I to have the orders without which my Colonel can't act, sir, or not?" said he to Lundy, who looked at him with a face of supercilious displeasure.

"Your young cockerel 'craws crouse,' Mr. Murray, as we say in Scotland," said he, turning to my father. "And yet I think it is but a week or two that he commenced his military education."

"He knows what you, perhaps, are ignorant of," said my father, "that King James's forces are come as near to the city as to St. Johnstown, and may, perhaps, be pardoned if he is anxious to see proper orders given in time *for this once*, having seen a battle lost on Monday, through nothing else than the lack of them."

My father spoke with the air of a judge; Colonel Lundy both winced and reddened.

"Lost through lack of proper orders, sir!" said he, with heat. "I protest I can't follow you; I wonder to hear you, indeed. How could raw men like ours face regular troops? Was it not best to withdraw them before they were all cut to pieces?"

"The same raw men that you speak of so disparagingly," said Mr. Walker, in a tone of offence, "have beat the Catholics a dozen times under mine own poor leading."

"And, sir," my father continued, in his severest tone, "if the popular report be true, you have even now sent away the trained soldiers that by your own showing might have opposed the Catholic army with some hope of victory."

"Sent them away, sir! How is that?" asked Lundy. "It seems that the popular report goes further than there's book for. The ships are still in the river; the officers have but gone down to bring up the men."

"Are we to take this statement as made upon your honour, most worshipful Governor?" said Wamphray, contempt stinging through his words.

"You push your privilege of ignorance very far, young gentleman—very far indeed," said Lundy, in a voice that shook with anger. "Were the time convenient, I would make it some of my business to teach you better manners."

"Because," continued Wamphray ruthlessly, taking no manner of heed of his anger, "it doth seem that the popular rumour takes some colour of likelihood when we hear that almost all the men of consequence are leaving the city, and getting them aboard of these same ships."

"And I myself heard that account given but last night of your intentions and actions, sir," said my father, "that if they be truly what you profess, you should lose no time in making them public; you may prevent much mischief thereby."

"For mine intentions, sir, they have ever been as open as the day," replied Lundy, "let mine enemies say what they will, and those that let their judgment be warped by failure. But for those leaving the town that can't fight, I own it hath my approval; 'tis not merely that we are benefited by the removal of useless mouths; but if, as seems too likely, we be beaten in spite of all, then many good men and true are out of the way of danger—some of them men excepted by name from the proclamations of mercy."

He saw that he had a little impressed Mr. Walker and Mr. Murray by his seeming candour, and he continued, addressing them and quite ignoring Wamphray :

"If the time served, I doubt not but that I could show you reason good enough, and such as you would both approve, for all I have done. But when I tell you that I'm on my way at this moment to the council-chamber to receive a messenger from that very army at St. Johnstown whereof you did me the honour to suppose me ignorant, you will agree with me, I'm sure, that I have spent long enough in talk, however valuable, for the present."

With that, and a very courtly bow, he left them ; but the good impression he had made could not stand the test of five minutes' reflection, for the reasons he had given were in too barefaced contradiction to what he had said so often and so lately of the great plenty he had collected of every sort of provision and munition. Wamphray was highly indignant at his effrontery, and pressed his opinion upon the other two in a way that assuredly he had not ventured, even so short a time ago as on Sunday ; so that we could not but admire how important a part of a man's education is action, and how quickly it takes effect. I could scarce believe that this man, so frank, so bold, so able to hold his own even in the presence of his elders, was my shy and submissive brother Wamphray. Mr. Murray looked at him once or twice, as though doubting the evidence of his ears, yet I saw he liked the change. Mr. Hewson, putting himself forward to rebuke it, was himself rebuked and taught to know his place for the future—a thing that mightily delighted me, though I looked down at my plate and said nothing.

As soon as dinner was over, Wamphray went out.

"I must find out one of the officers of the watch for to-night," said he, "and make sure of being allowed to pass in through the gates, if I return late from Culmore, as is most likely."

"You are going to Adam without leave from the Governor, then ?" said Mr. Murray.

"Certainly," said Wamphray. "I desire to tell him how the Governor tenders us, and what kind of orders he is like to send."

"You know, of course, that it's an act of mutiny you're about to commit," said my father.

"Towards Lundy, no doubt," said Wamphray ; "but it's the last of my thoughts to show him reverence at the expense of the country's service. Sure, you would never bid me ?" he asked of

Mr. Murray, to which his father replied by bidding him God-speed on his errand.

As far as the fear of mutiny was concerned, 'twould have been most inconsistent on Mr. Murray's part if he had forbidden it to his son, seeing he practised it himself that very afternoon; being one of that deputation that went down to the English ships, to invite Colonel Cunningham to assume the government of the place instead of Lundy. When they came back with "No" for their answer, there sprang up in the town a discontent that bade fair to grow into a riot. Mr. Murray was deeply grieved, especially when once or twice there were shots fired.

"But I can't blame them," said he, "seeing what they see—that the men of position are all leaving them, and that neither officers nor troops come back from the ships—it's but natural that they should draw their own conclusion. I can scarce blame Cunningham, either," said he, a little later, "for a man must be very sure he is in the right before he dare take the command out of the hands of his superior officer. But mark my words," he continued, after a silence, "the citizens are growing dangerous. As to the soldiers, they are dangerous already. The sending of the deputation to St. Johnstown, and the news that King James is there in person with his army hath run like wildfire through the city, and driven them all furious. It may well prove that Lundy hath wakened up a wild beast where he meant to lull a tamed one to sleep, and I'd never marvel if it proved his destruction yet, little as he thinks it."

But after nightfall the crowd in the streets melted gradually away, until, by bedtime, the guards had it all to themselves as usual. Bedtime came in our house the same as elsewhere, but it was allowed to pass without notice; for no thought had we of retiring until we should see our mutineer returned and safe.

He had been absent so long that we began to be a little restless, though cheering each other with the reflection that many a simple thing might happen to delay a foot-passenger. Towards eleven of the clock there came the sound of marching feet hurrying through the streets, that were by that time empty and silent, and rang to the sudden noise. Some of us thought we could distinguish Wamphray's voice as the party passed our house; but he did not enter; and we were fain to think ourselves mistaken, though with a doubt that increased our restlessness.

About half an hour later he came in, with a face as white as

ashes, so that Rosa ran to him with a cry, fearing he had come by some wound. But it was not hurt of body that had so blanched his countenance.

"Sir," said he to my father, "all the treachery that hath been suspected is trifling compared to the thing which we have just discovered; and, thank God, thwarted."

My father looked up at him with a face as white as his own. Wamphray drew Rosa to him, and continued:

"It's by the merest chance—or rather, I should say, by God's providence alone—that these dear eyes will open on to-morrow's light!"

His voice, as well as his aspect, gave ample confirmation of his words, so that I found myself trembling before I heard the thing I was to tremble at.

"I had been to Culmore, sir," continued Wamphray, "according to my intention. I had seen Adam, and was returning to the city. Acting as I was doing, without orders, it would have been my best plan to take the round-about to Butchers' Gate, where I could easily have got admittance, and from which I could have made my way to this house without risk of notice. It was what I meant to do when I left Adam; but—by God's special good care of us, I must believe—I fell into so deep a fit of musing that I kept the Strand without consideration, and came, of course, to the Ship-quay Gate instead."

By this time we were all got to our feet, and were hanging on his words as though we knew what was coming.

"Never a word of challenge was I met with," continued Wamphray, "so I laid my own hand on the handle of the gate; found it yield to me as easily as the handle of the door of this room, and with no more noise; and, it's the truth I'm telling you, I was among the guard—there were but four of them—before ever they knew it."

"They had been tampered with!" said my father, drawing a long breath.

"Not a doubt of it. I should think," said Wamphray, "that they're half-way to St. Johnstown by this time. I never said a word to them, bad or good, but ran at the top of my speed to Crofton, who's the officer of the watch, and who turned out in less time than it takes to tell it. Bishop's Gate was found to be in exactly the same case as the other; and there also there were but four men on guard. Crofton was told, in answer to his inquiries,

that it was the Governor in person that went the rounds to-night at the time of the locking-up of the gates ; and now the keys are nowhere to be found. What do you think of that ? ”

“ It’s only too easy to draw the conclusion,” said my father.

“ Oh, and I haven’t told you the whole,” continued Wamphray bitterly. “ Both gates moved so easily upon their hinges that they made hardly a sound ; that struck Crofton at once, and he examined them. They turned out to be newly oiled ; what was that for ? That hadn’t been done without the Governor’s connivance, if, indeed, it weren’t the work of his own hands.”

My father wiped his brow, which was beaded with moisture.

“ He hath gone about to procure our destruction,” said he.

“ That’s neither more nor less than the truth,” said Wamphray. “ It’s a miracle, nothing else, that we shall not all be massacred in our beds before morning. But we are safe, thank God, for this night ; the watch is under the command of a man that can be trusted. He hath doubled the guards and changed the word ; and if the enemy come, they’ll meet with a reception that will astonish them. But I do not think they will come. Their accomplices have fled, as I told ; and doubtless they are aware by this time that their designs are frustrate and hopeless.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NO SURRENDER.

COLONEL MACDONNEL of Colkitto vaunts himself, I am told, to have a kind of supernatural insight into the future, that he says belongs only to persons of Celtic descent. I have no desire to dispute their monopoly ; nor do I know, indeed, why they should pride themselves upon the possession of so uncomfortable a power. But this I know, that no second-sight, no ghostly prophecy, could have increased the certainty I felt that the morrow should see either the turning-point of our fortunes, or else the commencement of our utter ruin.

Sure, it needed little insight to know as much as that. The top of the hill is the point of the watershed. The stag that is hunted to the crag-foot knows as well as his pursuers that there he must conquer or there die. In like case were we ; our enemies approaching us on three sides, and our retreat upon the fourth all but cut off ; in fact, for the great bulk of us there was no possibility of retreat. Should we submit our neck to the old sorry yoke we had cast off ? or should we turn at bay, single-handed against all the rest of the kingdom ?

There seemed little choice, and so I kept telling myself. Our leaders, beaten after incredible hardship and devotion, had left us almost to a man—some in sore sickness, the consequences of these very efforts that had been brought to naught ; others in utter despair of our fortunes. The men of influence and position, who might have taken their places, were following them at the best of their speed—a proceeding that was eloquent of their conviction. Were it not utter folly and presumption in a scanty remnant to endeavour afresh what the whole strength of the province had

failed in ? Were "the rabble" to lift the weapons which their natural chiefs had thrown down, what could they deserve but to be annihilated ? Or what else could they expect ?

So, over and over again, I told myself all the morning. But ever, in spite of my wisdom, there rose before my mind the vision of the crowd that had filled the streets for the last two days. I saw the set faces, fearless and stern ; the strong hands that did but wait for weapons to wield them right grandly ; and then I felt, what I scarce dared think, that the last word of the quarrel was not spoken when our leaders bade us farewell.

Alas ! the day was young yet, when even I must have confessed, had any asked me, that the time was past for any action that could be of the smallest use.

I was out in the streets with Wamphray, and the reason of it was this : There had come from the Governor himself a message to Mr. Hewson, desiring his presence at the council that was a-holding ; Wamphray also was summoned, to receive those orders for his Captain that had been withheld the day before. And to me there came a message from Mrs. Browning, telling me that one of Thomas Ash's infant children was sick, of something that puzzled both herself and Mrs. Gardner, his sister, and asking me, when I could find the time and opportunity, to go and see it. I therefore desired Wamphray to take me with him as far as Thomas Ash's house in the Diamond, to which, after a little persuasion, he consented.

The streets were full of people, but nothing near so crowded as on the two previous days ; their talk, as we passed, was all of King James, his reported presence with the army, and whether that report could by any possibility be true ; of his envoy, who was even at that moment closeted with the Governor and council ; and of the summons that had been sent to the Nonconformist ministers to attend, which had put some simple souls in hope that now at last decisive steps were about to be taken. They made way for us to pass without the least difficulty, being as orderly and civil as one could wish to see them ; though none the readier for that to permit themselves to be sold and deceived with tame submission.

We were arrived at Thomas Ash's door, and were but waiting admittance, when there resounded from the Double Bastion the report of a great gun ; 'twas as unexpected as lightning from a clear sky, and as sudden in its effect. The crowd, that a moment

before had stood so quiet, fell to running, as fast as its own numbers would admit of, to the walls. We lost no time in getting us within the shelter of the doorway, which was opened to us with a question, what the firing could signify.

"There is but one thing it can signify," said Wamphray, "and that is that the enemy is come within range." And so got him gone towards the council-chamber as quick as we to the windows—Mrs. Browning and I, Mrs. Gardner, and the three children, who clung to our skirts, half in curiosity, half in terror. And the terror got the upper hand when presently there came another tremendous report from the Double Bastion.

Hard upon that came three men in uniform into the Diamond, attended by a drum, which they caused to beat for silence; and having obtained a hearing, they made known to all whom it might concern this notice:

"That, forasmuch as the King in person is with his army before the gates of the city, therefore the Governor commands and proclaims that the citizens and garrison maintain quietness and order, both in the streets and on the walls, while the negotiations are pending; and he who shall do aught to provoke his Majesty's displeasure upon us, whether by seditious shoutings, firing of guns, or in what other manner soever, shall be held guilty of high treason, and to have incurred the pains and penalties attached to the same."

If the Governor had heard the babel of murmuring that broke out as soon as the proclamation was made, it might have given him pause in the midst of his traitorous negotiations. That there was treason going, sure, we were all agreed; only, while he ascribed it to the citizens, they, with more reason, ascribed it to himself. The noise of these "seditious shoutings," that were forbidden, increased until they bade fair to grow to a riot; but soon there came one down the street that spoke to the people right and left, and a little soothed them. This was Mr. George Walker, on his way, he told them; to speak to Captain Adam Murray, at the Ship-quay Gate. After he had passed, the noise of the murmuring died away until it was possible to hear the words of it, which were all of Lundy's treason: how we were sold by him into the enemy's hands; how we had no course open to us save to submit, being fast entangled in the toils. "Not a captain left us," they said bitterly—"not one. Had we but *one* man that would guide us, sure, we'd follow him to death. But

there is not one—not one ! ” And we at the window above them echoed the words, “ Not one ! ” Truly, it seemed that the knell of our hopes and efforts was struck, and that it was of no use to strive against our fate any more.

Suddenly there arose a noise of shouting in Silver Street that sent the blood through my veins, and set my heart a-beating quicker than the firing of the gun had done. There passed a strange tremor through the crowd below, and with one consent they turned their faces in the direction of the sound. They could see no more than we what caused it; but to them as well as to us 'twas plain that it suggested hope. Distant and half heard though it was, we knew in a moment that this was no feigned rejoicing, put on to flatter a victor. There was no uncertainty about this shouting; it rang true.

It seemed as our souls must fly out of our straining eyes and ears to discover what was coming; but neither chafing nor guessing could either hasten it or inform us; there was nothing for it but to take good grasp of our patience, and wait till the newcomer should come in sight. Ever the nearer and the clearer came the shouting, and ever the clearer it grew the gladder it rang. The men in the Diamond began to take it up. I had in my hand a little wooden plaything belonging to one of the children, and presently I found that I had crushed it to atoms without knowing it, while trying to curb my passion of impatience.

Louder and louder grew the shouting, surer and surer the note of joy therein. It was indeed the mightiest anthem of thanksgiving that ever I heard in my life, though the music of it was nothing but the bursting gratitude of ten thousand hearts. 'Twas a kind of speech easy to comprehend, though inarticulate; and “salvation” could not have been plainer spoken, though an angel had pronounced it from the sky.

A minute after the hero of it all came riding out of Ship-quay Street into the Diamond, and it was Adam Murray, none else, mounted on his great black horse, and followed by a few men of his troop.

Mr. Walker walked beside him, his hand on Adam's bridle-rein; the old man had a spring in his gait, a fire in his eye, that seemed to have struck ten years from his age since he had passed down the street half an hour before. What spirit of prophecy seized the people I know not, but the acclamations that rang through the Diamond showed they knew that they had found

their leader at last. They crowded about him, so that his great horse had no power to stir; they touched his hands, his sword, his very bridle; they stretched out their clasped hands towards him, as though, like an angel of God, he had power to save them by his mere word or look; they cried to him to be their Governor, their General; 'twas a very tumult of welcome. And yet, for all their professions of loyalty and devotion to his word, he could not at first get silence to speak to them, though he beckoned with his hand for it over and over again. But at last he obtained it, though we at the window could not hear him even then, by reason of the seething of the crowd in their efforts to be silent and to hearken.

"One of the English officers," he was saying when I could make out his words, "told him to his face, I believe, that quitting of Derry was quitting of the kingdom. Look you, men, that's God's truth, and none can deny it. We have lost every place we owned, save this town alone. We've been pushed back out of Hillsborough, out of Dungannon, out of Coleraine; we are ousted from Lifford, Strabane, Carrigans, St. Johnstown. What can we do—where can we fall back upon—if we lose Derry as well? Ireland will belong to King James again from sea to sea, and I needn't ask you if that's what you desire."

At that there arose such a shouting of "No!" and "Never!" that his voice was fairly drowned in it. But in a minute he made it heard once more.

"'Never,' you say, and 'Never,' say I, too, with all my heart. But you know that that's what your precious Governor is busy about this very minute, drawing up a capitulation to be sent to King James, who's waiting at the end of the Windmill Hill till the gates are opened to him."

At this again there was a storm of execration, as great as a moment before; but his strong voice quickly mastered it.

"But who's to open them if you, the citizens, refuse your consent? And who's to compel you to consent against your will? What's the value of Lundy's composition unless you ratify it? And, in the name of all you care for, what's to induce you to ratify a vile treaty made by a knave and coward for your destruction and his own gain?"

Faith, the walls of the council-chamber must have been of the thickest if Lundy did not hear in it the shout of defiance that rose at that moment in the Diamond without.

"Listen to me, men," said Adam, rising in his stirrups, and looking round about upon the crowd that packed the Diamond as far as he could see. "Listen, I say. You see those gallant gentlemen behind me? Do you know that I had some ado to restrain them an hour ago, when we caught sight of King James's army, from charging into the midst of them to try how many lives they could sell their own for? That was mere madness, for a small company; but here—why, I see an army in front of me, and not a man of you, I believe, but is ready to do the same thing."

Sure enough, for another cheer, not to be suppressed, interrupted him; but it was speedily silenced, and he continued:

"I knew it, for are we not all of one mind? and when have we ever had our will? Checked, and hindered, and held back at every point, whose fault is it that we are brought to this? It's none of our own, that I'm sure of, and that we'll show them before they are many hours older. But," says he, pulling himself up, as it were, "it's not a battle we must fight—that would be a pleasure in the temper you've shown me—we have harder work before us. We are come to that pass, men, that we must either stand a siege in our city or let the Governor have his will. I needn't ask you which it is to be."

Truly he needed not, for he had had one answer already, and presently he had another that out-matched it. All the pent-up rage and relief, despair and hope, that had filled the hearts of these men for the last three days, found vent in the ringing, deafening cheers that pealed out around him, and were taken up by the people that were out of sight in the other streets, until it verily seemed as though the whole city had gone shouting mad. Again and again Adam raised his hand for silence, but not until they had tired themselves with shouting did he obtain it.

"I am answered, and answered well," said he, when at last he could make himself heard. "But, men, I am unworthy of your confidence if I let you think that this was like to be a short and easy struggle—a week of fighting, and after that victory. This little corner is all that stands between King James and the sovereignty of Ireland; not a doubt but he and his generals will do their best to crush us. It will be a struggle to the death. Are you ready for that? It may cost you suffering worse than death before you see their backs. Are you ready for that? Are you willing to defend the city to the last drop of your blood, to the last

pulse of your hearts? Hardship or no hardship, is there to be *no surrender?* "

'Twas the very thing they lacked—a watchword; and he had taught it to them. "No Surrender! No Surrender!" The words went ringing through the Diamond, and far beyond it, like the answering cheer he had provoked, till the enemy on the Windmill Hill must have heard them as well as we.

"Then," says Adam, "there remains but one thing to be done: we must know our friends; and to that end we must have a badge. What shall it be? I know," said he, pulling out his handkerchief and binding it about his arm; "let it be this. Let every man that is—I say not *willing*, but *determined*—to follow me, tie a band of white about his left arm, as I have done. 'Twas the badge of the Catholics long ago, when they were ready to murder every Protestant—as they are now. Let us change its meaning, and make it the badge of Protestants that are ready to die for their faith and country."

He had scarce finished speaking ere there was such a tearing of kerchiefs around him as sure was never seen before since Derry was a city. And presently every man in the street was decorated like himself. The men that were, as he said, determined to support him in the course of "No surrender," were, to speak by the book, simply every man in Derry that was worth his salt.

Mr. Walker, decorated like the rest, was seen to speak to him; the people stood silent to hearken.

"Are you going to tell all this to the Governor?" was what he asked.

"Straight," said Adam. And methought his look was something grim.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A HAPPY REVOLUTION.

LUNDY, in his president's chair, at the head of the council-board, surrounded by near all the men of consequence and repute that his practices had left in the city; the treaty of surrender upon the table in front of them, drawn up fair and full, lacking but the signatures, and these for the most part promised—did he not seem too near the point of success to be baulked? Adam Murray at the Ship-quay Gate, with a dozen men to his back—was he not to all appearance an adversary scarce worth taking note of—too contemptibly weak to be feared? And King James, with his army of five-and-twenty thousand men, advanced as near to us as to the Upper Strand—were they not a power great enough to enter those gates that Lundy was so desirous to set open to them; to possess the city, whether that *cowardly rabble* left in it consented or no; and with the city, to enter upon possession of the whole of Ireland?

Faith, it seemed so to us, left in Captain Ash's house to wait for tidings, and Mrs. Gardner maintained it even with tears. With such a power as the Catholic army at his back, could not Lundy afford to laugh at Adam, even though the streets were lined with those that had sprung to range themselves behind him? It seemed no equal match. Their opposition might be, as the saying hath it, "a nut to crack"; but with such a pair of levers as James's army and the treaty of capitulation in the hands of our commissioned Governor, it seemed an easy thing to crush it and be done with it.

And yet, scarce a couple of hours had passed before it was plain, beyond question, that Lundy's power was the thing that had been

crushed. The change that passed over the demeanour of the waiting crowds showed that as clear as dawn in the sky shows that night is done. Much the same kind of change, too; from darkness to light; from impotent, angry despair, to hope and action. A stir and a shaking began everywhere at once, like that the prophet saw among the dry bones. As in that vision bone came together to his bone, and flesh clothed them, so with us: the separate members found each his fellow, joined themselves into a body forthwith, and became a living power. The men that had stood idle in the streets—together, yet single; even what they were deridingly called, a mere rabble—found themselves of a sudden transformed into orderly regiments fit for service, officered by men of their own choosing; who, they knew, would lead them with both discretion and valour.

Never was there a revolution more thorough nor more beneficent; and as for Lundy's authority, Haman's of old was not cast down more completely nor more irretrievably. But of the manner of it we could gather little at the time. They that conduct such movements, even upon so small a scale as in the government of a single city, have their hands too full to find time to answer questions.

But we, though trustworthy accounts of all that had passed would have been welcomer to us than rain to parched meadows, were so satisfied with the new aspect of things that we could make a shift to possess our souls in patience, until such time as our friends should be able to give them to us.

Next day there was the same press and bustle of business, and again 'twas only the barest outline thereof that came to our ears. That a new council had been called, and was sitting for the purpose of choosing a Governor in Lundy's stead, was noised throughout the town; and we were astonished to hear it presently rumoured that Major Baker and Mr. George Walker were pitched upon to fill the office conjointly, for we had no thought but that it should have been Adam. But he, the rumour went, was named Colonel of the Horse, and General in the field, which was, we knew, an appointment more to his mind. News, that day, spread like wildfire. That an envoy was come from King James, to discover what delayed the capitulation, was known throughout the town before the man had got him well within the doors of the council-chamber. Methinks he had little need to go there for his answer, but might well, if he were a person of any discrimination, have read it in the faces of the townsmen and in the aspect of the streets. And after

that we heard that Adam was gone out of the town to settle the business of the Articles of surrender by himself alone, upon our part, with King James's representatives. It seemed as though the enemy had made very sure of us indeed, and it was hardly possible to wait patiently for the account of that interview. But what they were saying in the streets, that we said in the house—that we were in Adam Murray's hands, and therefore were safe.

Later in the day there came to be held in my father's house, in the most natural manner in the world, what I might truly describe as another council of war, for there were present our new-appointed Governors, both of them; Adam Murray, who, if he was not equal to them in dignity, was superior to them in influence; and my father and Wamphray, both members of the new council; besides Mr. Hewson, who cannot be kept out of any business that is done in Mr. Murray's house. And the business they came together to debate was, "What's to be done with Lundy?" who kept his chamber, very wisely, since his life (as had been said in my hearing a dozen times over) had not been worth a minute's purchase had he been so ill-advised as to appear in the public streets.

Mr. Walker, we perceived, had a little gained in consequence and dignity already, since his new appointment. He seemed surprised and not best pleased that Mr. Hewson set himself down with the rest to share their deliberations.

"Sir!" said he, pompously, "I'm aware that I ought to know your name. I regret to say it hath escaped my memory."

"My name, sir," said the other, looking at him from under his brows, every whit as sternly as Mr. Walker's regard was haughty, "is Hewson."

"Ah, I remember," said Mr. Walker; "you are he that came from Scotland to swear us all to the Covenant."

"Nay, sir," said the other; "I am no more than a near relative of that good man—being, in fact, his brother."

It was evident that Mr. Walker longed to bid him withdraw, but none of the others seemed like to back him in the request, and he forbore to make it. He went straightway and established himself in my father's great chair at the head of the table; whereat my father raised his brows, but sat down without a word next to Adam. Rosa and I would have withdrawn ourselves, knowing that 'twas our duty, though much against our will, but Adam called to us to stay where we were.

"For this," said he, "is no formal council, but a mere friendly

discussion ; and, sure, a woman's wit may see a way through many a maze that would bewilder ours. For instance, here's this of Lundy—what are we to do with him ? He hath deserved death, and cheaply ; but I for one am not desirous to begin our rule by an execution. What say you ? ”

“ Hew him in pieces before the Lord, like Agag,” said Mr. Hewson.

Sure, if ever a face said, “ Who hath asked for your opinion ? ” ’twas the face of Mr. George Walker, as he turned it upon this intruder. And scarce was its expression more friendly when he looked at Adam Murray, who, contrary to all the rules of manners, had opened the debate without being asked. He gave a “ Hem ” that was meant to introduce a speech from the chair ; but ’twas altogether fruitless, they were already too far aloft to heed his lure ; and that which he would fain have constituted into a council-meeting was degenerated into a mere party of friends consulting at their ease and leisure.

One after another, the gentlemen assembled stated their views ; and upon the whole, each desired to spare Lundy's life—not so much because they wished to show mercy upon him as for the reason Adam had stated, that ’twas an ill fashion of opening their rule by bloodshed. Mr. Hewson, no whit abashed, had a reason to render back to each one, why he judged amiss, and why Lundy should suffer the due punishment of his treason. But Mr. Walker, a little offended at their lack of observance towards him, never opened his lips until they had all said their say. From time to time I cast mine eyes upon him, each time with a new motion of wonder how a grown man should show himself so childish.

At last it began verily to seem as though they should be brow-beat into hanging Lundy against their will, so full was Mr. Hewson of his instances, and so instant with his reasons.

“ The man,” said he, with a gesture that seemed designed to clinch the matter, “ hath been delivered into your hands, and it will be at your peril—ay, and you shall dearly answer it—if you suffer him to escape ! ”

At that Mr. Walker spoke, and spoke with great simplicity, so that this time I wondered how a man that had just shown himself so childish should show himself now so worshipful.

“ I think, sir, under your favour,” said he to Mr. Hewson, “ that you're mistaken ; and 'tis just because he is so entirely delivered into our hands that I would give my voice for letting

him go. Your instances are something antiquated ; and mercy to our enemies hath been taught us since then."

"This man," said Mr. Hewson, as ready to hold his own with Mr. Walker as with any of the rest, "is not our enemy alone, but the enemy of God as well."

"You say truth," said Mr. Walker ; "and so I think I'd be for leaving him in God's hands for punishment." He spoke reverently, far more so than Mr. Hewson. "We have suffered—or been in danger of suffering—so much from his treason, that I should fear lest something of revenge for our own injuries should mingle with our zeal, and defile it."

"'Tis a scruple very honourable to your cloth, sir," said Adam, with respectful countenance, whereat Mr. Hewson took his turn to look slighted.

"Let him but show his face in the street," said he, "and that question will be settled without either trial or judge. Did you chance to pass by his house last night, may I ask ? and did you see the men he had so nearly betrayed standing around it ten or a dozen deep, lest he should escape ?"

"I did," said Adam, gravely ; "and I agree with you, sir, that had he shown himself, he'd have been torn in pieces. That, beyond question, had been a great misfortune ; for it could not have failed to damage the cause."

"The cause, sir, give me leave to tell you," said Mr. Hewson, "is too good to take damage from an act of justice."

"Nay, sir," said Mr. Walker—and again he spoke with gravity and simplicity—"there is no cause so good that it will bear to be handled with bloody hands."

Never a man put me in so many minds as this Mr. Walker what to think of him. When he was pompous and arrogant, I contemned him ; when he was martial—and truly he was as good a soldier as any man among those that had been bred to it, and so they said themselves—I marvelled at his cloth ; but when, as at this time, the real goodness of the man broke through the outer husks of manner and littleness, I could not choose but reverence him ; and I understood the motives of Adam and Major Baker in recommending him to be joint-Governor of the town.

That it was the work of these two came out in the course of the talk that we all fell into, leaving the question of Lundy's fate still undetermined. I was so unmannerly as to put the question, why Adam himself had not been named our Governor ? seeing that he

and he only had been able, the day before, to make himself obeyed. Major Baker made haste to express his concurrence with me.

"Madam," said he, "give me leave to assure you that it's his own fault and no one else's. The office was offered to him; and there's not a man of us but would have been happy to serve under him, and done it loyally, too. But he could not be brought to accept; I own I'm at a loss to understand his objections."

"Why, truly," said Adam, "I can but marvel at that, for I stated them plainly enough at the council. 'Tis a wise man that knows his own gifts—and that wise man am I! In the field, now—there I know what to do, and I make no secret that I'd rather lead than follow. But in matters of policy—no! There I'm as simple as a child, and, happily for you all, I know it."

He ended with his great, good-humoured laugh, and turning to my father, he appealed to him.

"Have I given proof of my wisdom herein, uncle," said he, "or have I not?"

"I cannot tell," said Mr. Murray; "for I, too, should have said you were a man very fit for the office."

"I thought you had known me better," said Adam, sedately. "What use am I in a formal council-meeting, for instance? None. Here 'tis different; I can say what I think, because there's no need for speech-making or graces of diction! But in public! why, I am but a dumb dog, and you all know it. You want one that can bark." And he made a gesture towards Mr. Walker.

Now, I have often heard that gentleman censured for his jealousy; but when I remember how he broke out in reply to this speech of Adam's, I scarce can believe him guilty of any such thing.

"Sir," said he, "you are mistaken; you are utterly and entirely mistaken, both in your estimate of your own powers and of ours. When I remember you yesterday, first in the street and afterwards at the council-board, faith, sir, there was none of us, not one, spoke half so easily, or half so much to the point."

"It's an easy matter," said Adam, "to speak out that which hath been boiling in one's heart for months, especially when a man hath no reason to care whether he keeps within bounds of courtesy or not. You were all too tender of Lundy, his feelings and his prejudices. Why, the man hath *no* feelings that can be wounded; and even now, could you see into his soul, you'd find he is but grieved at being hindered from perfecting his treason, and mortified

at losing the reward of it—no doubt he had it specified to him in black and white : such and such a dignity, and so much in cash. That he is unmasked, and hath lost the good opinion of many that were his friends, sure it troubles him not a whit ; I'll warrant him ! ”

“ There were some upon the walls to-day,” said Major Baker, “ would have given much to know what offers were being made to yourself, when you and my Lords Strabane and Abercorn walked to and fro so long, and plunged so deep in talk.”

“ They're welcome to hear it for me,” said Adam. “ A commission of Colonel of Horse in King James's army, and a thousand pound in gold—that was what they offered me if I would perfect the Articles that Lundy had begun. I told them 'twas a poor kind of compliment to try to buy me for so little ! ”

He rose, and was leaving us, with a careless shaking of the garments, as who should say, “ Enough of so profitless a subject ! ” but our curiosity would not endure to be so thwarted.

“ Tell us, I pray you, Adam,” said Rosa, “ what you said to Lundy.”

“ I did but tell him to his face, cousin,” said he, “ what all these gentlemen were thinking—that he was either a knave, and not to be trusted, or else a fool, and incapable to bear rule. And as he seemed to question my judgment, I gave him the history of the whole campaign, from point to point, showing him why, though we were usually victorious in the particulars, we were beaten upon the whole. 'Twas wholesome hearing for him ; or would have been, had it come a little sooner.”

“ 'Twas wholesome hearing for all of us,” said Mr. Walker warmly, as Adam quitted the room, “ and very humbling, to be shown how easily and how completely he had hoodwinked us all by his cunning. When he handled the case of Dungannon, I knew not whom to be most wroth at—Lundy, for having laid the trap, or George Walker, for having gone into it so foolishly.”

“ I admired the most,” said Wamphray, “ when he came to handle the Articles that were on the table. Lundy's change of front,” said he to Rosa and me, “ when he found that his attempt to browbeat Adam had merely landed him in a thorough exposure, was as complete as sudden. He did all but admit the truth of everything Adam had charged him with. “ But,” said he, “ now that things are come to such a pass, sure, the only course for us

is to capitulate on the best terms we can procure ;' and fell to showing him why he should set his hand to the paper, like the rest. But Adam looks deliberately round upon the councillors, as counting them, which I believe he was doing. 'Sir,' says he, 'you know as well as I do that articles of this kind are not valid save when agreed to in a full council of war, which this,' quoth he, 'is not, for half your officers are not in it, nor near it. No, sir,' he continues ; 'the true council of war to-day is in the streets, and thither I'll go to consult ;' and so went away and left them by the ears together over the order in council that sent away the English troops, which Lundy had drawn up in concert with their officers. 'Twas as unexpected as shocking to the most of those that were in session with him at that moment when Mr. Mogredge, encouraged by Adam's plain speaking, took heart of grace and produced it."

Here, then, we had the history of our little revolution, which, sure, was no less important to us than the great one to the entire kingdom. But we were yet to be witnesses of a sequel to it that matched, upon our small scale, one of the features of that greater one.

For Rosa and I, having been to Thomas Ash's home to ask for his child that had been sick, were returning at dusk. One day of good government had made so great a difference in the state of the streets, that it was a pure pleasure to consider it. The day before, when I went abroad on the same errand, I had been delayed for hours before it was possible to make my way home again. This evening any one, the timidest, might have gone from end to end of the town without cause to tremble. It was scarce to be credited that the mere sense of security should have wrought so great a change.

My father met us on the threshold, and there we stood speaking together, when we saw, coming out of Mr. Walker's house, a little further down the street, a common soldier bearing a great load of match on his back. Bent and burdened as he went, there was something familiar in the gait of this soldier. He looked to right and left of him as he came out of the house, as if debating which way it were best to go. From the wall at the end of the streets there came the sound of a sentry's challenge ; 'twas the hour of the changing of the watch. That settled the soldier's mind ; and I think his hesitation, as well as the decision he came to, settled ours. We knew him ; it was no other than Colonel Lundy.

Having chosen to go by the Diamond, he was obliged to pass us, and that very near. Had we had time to think of it, I make no doubt we had turned our eyes away from him, for who would choose to exult over a fallen enemy? and he, had he taken thought, had sure done anything rather than encounter recognition. But so it fell out, that in passing us he looked up; our eyes met, and he saw himself known.

"You would not betray me?" said he, in a low voice. Ay, and it trembled upon the words, for all he is a soldier.

"Go in peace for me," replied my father, as softly.

So he passed out of our sight, round the corner of the Diamond, and we saw him no more. And that was the last of Colonel Lundy in Derry, for by means of his disguise and a pass from Mr. Walker he got clear away.

"See the reward of treachery!" said my father to us, as we came into the house.

"And what is that, sir, I pray you?" asked Mr. Hewson, looking up from his papers.

"One flying in disguise, in contempt and peril, that might have kept the most honoured place among us, as he held it," said Mr. Murray sadly.

"What?" said Mr. Hewson, springing to his feet. "Is he got away?" I will go out and raise the people. I will——"

"You will, I hope, refrain from making mischief which you will find it hard to mend!" said my father sharply.

His eyes sparkled; 'tis easy at times to see that he hath been a passionate man in his youth.

"Mischief, sir!" said the other, as angrily as he. "It is not I that will have caused it, but those that wink at evil-doing."

And so went forth at the top of his speed, but returned after half an hour a little crestfallen. Rosa desired to know from him, partly, I believe, to cheer him, what had happened.

"Moderate your curiosity, young mistress," said he angrily. "Will talking of that which hath been ill done mend it?"

"But this, sure," I said, "scarce stands in need of mending."

"Mending!" said he, for the man, I believe, was half beside himself with anger. "Ay, truly, it stands in need of mending, and of marring to boot, before 'tis ready for mending. The enemies of the Lord have it their own way at this time. Will it be for ever, think you? No, verily! Will the Lord suffer such to triumph, think you, as have no mind to walk in His ways? He

hath cast down those that feared Him *least* from their high seats. Was it, think you, merely to set up those that fear Him *little* in their stead?"

Rosa looked at him more than half frightened at his vehemence; I, with indignation at his violence and intolerance.

"'Tis a riddle, sir, I perceive, that you would set us," I replied to his question. "I protest I am not in the spirits to care for such diversions." Then, as he frowned upon me, I took Rosa by the hand. "Come away, dear," I said to her. "We, like Mr. Hewson himself, for the matter of that, shall know the answer when it comes."

And so, making him a deep curtsy, I turned upon my heel and left him.

Strange, that the next news of Lundy should be of the surrender of Culmore to the enemy, which he by his falsehoods had procured on his way to the ships that had waited for him at Greencastle. And stranger yet, to me, that Mr. Hewson, for all his airs of prophecy, never claimed it as proof of his wisdom, but left each of us to draw the conclusion that liked him.

CHAPTER XXX.

A TRAITOR'S REVENGE.

ANOTHER strange thing, and one that since hath often set me musing, was this : how many times, my differences with Mr. Hewson were followed by some pain or trouble to myself. That this was what some that wished me very well would fain have had me take it for, I could never believe (to wit, a kind of punishment for my contumacy, or warning to accept his guidance in the future), not finding his sayings of that quality that seemed to me to deserve Divine confirmation. As I said to Rosa more than once, it might be a sequel to, but was no consequence of, these arguments.

In this case, the trouble followed hard upon the heels of the contention. The next morning Mr. Walker, passing our house, desired to see me, and delivered to me a letter that he said had been entrusted to him by Colonel Lundy for my reading, and afterwards to be destroyed.

"And sure," said he, "it must contain news of the first importance, when he could think of it at a moment so engrossing as that of his own escape."

So did I think, though that the news was good by no means followed, when I considered what passages of antagonism had taken place between us more than once. He had professed to think these excusable, and even praiseworthy in my circumstances ; but then, what faith could be put in any word of Lundy's ? And so with some qualms I unfolded the letter.

The beginning was gone from it, and so was the signature ; but the name of a friend caught my eye at the first glance, and after that I wasted no time in wondering who it came from. Thus, something thus, the fragment ran :

"Concerning the Lord Viscount Mountjoy, about whom you make inquiry, his mission hath highly displeased the King of England; who indeed had little favour for him before his coming, owing to what he hath learnt of his Protestant leanings and seditious practices. 'Tis true enough that he is thrown into the Bastille; have you any yearnings to hear that he is set at large again? If you had, I should be much surprised, though, after all, he is an old comrade of yours, and no doubt you owe him some friendship.

"Another friend of yours is come to us out of Ireland—through England, like so many good things—one James Hamilton, that was formerly, like yourself, an officer of Mountjoy's, and, by what I hear, hand and glove with his Colonel. I am credibly informed he came to the King with powers from the P. of O. to treat for the release of that lord, if either ransom or exchange would do it. The late Lord Chancellor, they say, was offered for him. But Hamilton either came to the King at an ill time, or else he managed his embassy amiss, for he is clapt up in the same prison with his friend. 'Twill be some time, I judge, before either of them sets foot in Ireland again."

There was more of the letter, but all about indifferent things and persons. To the part I have written down I came back, and read it again and again, till I had it by heart. Then I gave it back to Mr. Walker, to be destroyed, according to his promise.

"I take leave to hope, madam," quoth he, "that your news is good."

"'Tis—*mixed*," I told him. Sure, I had reason to call it so, at least, because of the good hope it gave me that Captain Hamilton was no deserter after all, but had King William's authority for giving over his trust to his cousin. I had reason, I say, to think it so, and to call it so; but the name of the Bastille hath such terror in it that it thrust the rest out of sight. There was that in my voice that brought Rosa to my side with her quick "What's amiss?" and her anxious, loving eyes, that compelled an answer.

"There can be no breach of confidence in telling you my part of it," said I, slowly, for I had rather have kept it to myself, dreading, foolishly enough, the sound of a thing so horrible. "The writer of the letter—Lundy hath cut away his name—confirms the rumour that my Lord Mountjoy is cast into the Bastille."

"That's no news," interrupted Mr. Walker. "We have known

that for a fact this great while. Lundy did not send you the letter to assure you of that."

"No," I returned; "he did not. The thing he desires I should know"—for all my efforts I could not keep my voice controlled and steady, and its shaking angered me at mine own weakness—"the thing he desires I should know is that Captain Hamilton shares his prison."

"Is thrown into the Bastille along with him?" said Rosa, with blanching face.

"Into the Bastille, yes," I replied, and sat me down upon a chair, looking straight before me, but seeing nothing.

"Oh, Mary!" she cried, throwing her arms about me, "how could you say it was *mixed*?"

In truth, every corner of my mind was engaged in putting the same question.

"This is Lundy's revenge," said Rosa, "for what you did to him at Clonally. He durst not strike a woman with his hand for fear of men's tongues, so he took this crafty, mock-kindly way to deal you a crueller blow—the coward!"

So he was; for that was what he intended, past a doubt; not knowing that with the evil tidings he was sending me some of such value that it was very nearly salve to the blow.

Wamphray came bursting into the room, flushed, and waving his hands for some gladness.

"Rejoice, rejoice!" he cried; "rejoice for the first earnest of our victory! King James hath quitted his army. He is off to Dublin at the top speed of his horses. The first discharge of our artillery hath sent him scampering out of hearing of it, like a hill pony. But what on earth's amiss?" he ended, looking from one to another of us in wonder.

Rosa began to weep. And I—what in the name of all marvels think you that I did? I broke out laughing; 'tis the truth. I sat there upon my chair, and laughed as though my husband's captivity were the best of jests. They looked at me as though they thought me crazy. I fell to wondering if I was.

The shouting of the people came to our ears from the Diamond. I cared not for it a single straw. If it had been a public lamentation it had moved me just as little. I, that the day before had been so wrapped up in the public affairs, that even my little son had scarce been able to distract my thoughts from them, was now as callous to them as if they had been the battles of the gods upon

Olympus, or of the Pigmies with the Cranes. That day I verily think the walls might have been breached, that King James might march over them in triumph, or the market-house have been turned into King William's throne-room, and I would not have troubled to lift my head to see either the one thing or the other.

After this a kind of numbness grew upon me, though I strove against it with all my power. 'Twas a kind of mist that arose before my mind—a kind of muffling round my feeling of things. Even the children were powerless to penetrate it. I occupied myself very much with them—more than was my custom; for being together, they were happy, and throve and played as I had never seen them do before. No one could help taking pleasure to see that, but the pleasure was something apart from myself; that I knew, but could not feel. I forced myself to join in their games, but even their baby wits were not deceived by my gaiety. They would break off in the midst of their diversions to ask what ailed me; they would climb upon my lap, and bid me cheer up when I was laughing with all the mirth I could counterfeit. Had their elders done the like, I am certain my wits had left me; but with them I armed myself with a pretence of calmness that did but increase my apathy.

The business of the defence that the town was full of; the placing of the guns to the best advantage; the appointing to each regiment of its post in case of attack, and of its duties in case of a sally;—sure, the day before they had been meat and drink to me; this day they were but a weariness. And on the next, though I went like all the rest that could find room to the cathedral, and heard Mr. Walker preach his great sermon from the text "Our help is in the Lord, that made heaven and earth," which stirred the hearts of his hearers like a trumpet, I cared nothing for it. It passed in at one ear and out at the other at the time; but, sure, there must have been some kind of net in my head that caught the sense of it, for as I write I can bring back both the picture and the words;—how he first laid bare to us our forlorn condition and our weakness, so that it seemed as though the task were clean beyond our strength, and the people's faces began to be dashed with doubt and misgiving; and then rose up a wind of prophecy, and showed how the city's cause was God's as well, and how the might of our foes was a thing beneath contempt, not fit to be reckoned up or put in the balance, with His aid to back us. All that heard that sermon—save one—went out

of the cathedral as though they trod on air, and with a consciousness of power upon them that was a foretaste of victory. For the one, poor creature! she was so far gone in languor of mind that she scarce could muster up the interest to wonder at the rest.

Mr. Walker—or God Almighty speaking by his mouth—had not kindled this fire of valour to let it burn away into ashes to no purpose. What is that I have heard Captain Hamilton quote?—that “spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues.” It was proved true this same afternoon.

For now the investiture was complete; now the siege was fairly opened. The enemy had been playing a gun upon us all the morning; with small effect, either on the spirits or the property of the townsmen. Instead of driving them from the walls, it drew them there; so that they saw a party of the enemy taking their way towards Pennyburn and Brookhall, no doubt with intent to pass these places and attack Culmore.

I know not but that, in the state of their temper, the mere sight of a detached party of manageable numbers had been a temptation to them. Certes, that and the thought of good service to their friends at Culmore together was one that they could not resist. A sally was no sooner proposed than 'twas agreed to, and scarce agreed to than 'twas put in execution. The hedges between the Ship-quay Gate and Pennyburn Mill were lined with some of our foot, to the number of near five hundred, in a marvellous short space of time, while the horse, under Adam's command, endeavoured to intercept and cut off the attacking party; 'twas divided into two squadrons, of which he led the first, while the second or reserve followed him under command of Major Bull. They quickly overtook the party they were in chase of, and charged them, and would presently have made an end of them, even without the aid of the foot.

But Maumont their General perceived their danger, and came charging to their rescue, followed by a large party of the flower of his army. They fell upon Adam's reserve, who, being utterly out-matched, retreated upon the town, the enemy following them up to the very gate.

Had their panic been a feint, as it was but too genuine, it could not have served them better. For there was no retreat for their pursuers, save between the river and those hedges that bristled with our men. Major Bull's party, reissuing from the gate, with Mr. Walker among them, drove them back by the way

they had come; and the foot took them in hand as they fled in their turn; so that only a very few of them lived to rejoin their friends, who now came pouring across the bog to their aid, and that of the party Adam was engaged with.

By that time the demi-culverin that had been playing on us all the morning from Clooney Height was brought down to the edge of the river, exactly opposite the point of the battle; their gunner fired a few shots across among our men, and would no doubt have continued his ball practice to our detriment. But our master-gunner, Mr. Watson, with a cannon of ours that was perched on the wall beside the Ship-quay Gate, took so good an aim at them that with a single shot he both disabled their gun and killed their gunner, and so put a happy end to that diversion.

Maumont, enraged no doubt that so many of his soldiers could give no better account of our "*cowardly rabble*," thought to break the back of this dispute with a single stroke; and so, singling out Adam, he rid for him. But, faith, he had tackled an adversary he could not settle. They lashed out great strokes at each other, their men standing round to watch them, as though 'twere an antique single combat of two knights; save that a man of the Irish took aim at Adam's noble black horse, and fired a shot that hit him in the shoulder—a dastardly deed, sure, under the circumstances, but one that brought about the undoing of his General. For the horse, rearing at the pain of the wound, gave such force to Adam's next stroke that Maumont was smitten clean through the neck and shoulder, and fell from his horse a dead man. His fall was the signal for a rout that none of the Irish officers could check, and our men returned to the city rejoicing and triumphing in a signal victory.

There the satisfaction was even passionate. For this was the first time our soldiers had been allowed their own way with the enemy, and instead of fleeing before them, 'twas the enemy that had been completely routed, with a loss of at least ten men to our one; not to mention one of their chief commanders, and several other officers. A great deal of booty was also left on the field of battle, and fell to the share of the victors; one item thereof created a greater tumult of joy among the superstitious people of the baser sort than even the victory itself. This was a piebald horse that had belonged to one of their officers; it was brought unharmed into the town, and forthwith some man recollected an ancient prophecy that promised the eventual victory to the side that

should capture such a horse as that. The silly saying was repeated from mouth to mouth with ever-growing delight, until it seemed that even among the better sort that far-off final triumph was held to be ours already. I think it was gazed at more, and more thankfully, as it was led through the streets, than its captors.

Every creature that was not walking in that triumphal procession was at the windows, a spectator of it. I, of course, was at mine, trying to feel like the rest, as I knew I ought. But the plaudits rang as flat upon mine ear as the words of Mr. Walker's sermon; I took shame to myself to know it, but never a bit the more did I care for them, for that. Two things, and only two, pierced through my veil of indifference; one was the drawn white face of poor young Cornet MacLelland, as he was carried past me wounded on a litter; the other was the face that Adam turned now and then from the shouts that greeted him upon his wounded horse, which he led by the bridle up the street. The poor creature leant his muzzle upon his master's shoulder, as though in that touch he found healing and forgetfulness for his pain.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

STRUGGLE as I might, I could not break through that barrier of cruel apathy that enclosed me. Sure, the chilly winter mists can hem one in as effectually as the walls of a prison, though they be nothing near so stout. Such a mist was I wrapped up in; and I wonder if the bareness of prison walls could weigh heavier on the spirits than its gray and narrowing blankness.

Nothing availed to pierce it. The funeral that was made for those that had fallen at Pennyburn Mill—I saw it, like all the rest of the town; and, sure, I thought they made a great and unnecessary to-do about a fate that was fair and happy; what was there to grieve for when a man died a man's death, and had his reward at the moment? When the second and still more encouraging engagement was fought at the same place, with a second French general among the slain, what cared I? Not a single straw. The cannonade from Strong's Orchard, over against the Ship-quay Gate, was a terror to some of us; for my part, I minded it no more than thunder in summer; the shrieking of the bombs I heeded as little as the whistling of an autumn wind.

Some that had been forward to blame me for what they thought my over-keenness about the public affairs in the beginning of the siege would now go out of their way to fetch me news they thought should rouse me; I marked their efforts with a little faint gratitude, and perhaps a little faint amusement. But for being roused by any news they told me, good lack! one thing seemed as much a concern of mine as another, and that was not one whit.

When Mrs. Susan Holden, an ancient gentlewoman that was not of my acquaintance, was killed in her bed by a cannon-ball that broke through the window of her chamber, it became the topic of talk in the town ; and all that spoke of it agreed in professing themselves mightily shocked at a death so awful. For my part, I wondered if any death could be less grievous. She was eighty years of age ; there could be little left in her cup of life but lees ; she never knew what hurt her, but passed from quiet slumber into slumber yet quieter. But if she had been but five-and-twenty, and the best of her life to come, how could such a death be compared to the death-in-life of imprisonment in the Bastille ?

And I had done him an injustice in my thoughts, I told myself ; and presently fell to wondering if I had, for I could not forget that his cousin had brought me a different story from that in Lundy's letter. James would scarce have concealed his mission from him, I thought, if it were true that he had a mission. But then, on the other hand, it was possible that secrecy might have been enjoined upon him ; and either way, he was a miserable captive in the worst prison on earth.

Many a time, when I thought myself to be giving my mind wholly to some other thing, I found myself ringing the changes on these three notes. More and more they came between me and all my former interests, until I began to be half resigned to it, and ceased to try to regain my zest in life.

I tried to cover my stupor by an artful mask of mine old self ; but it deceived nobody. " Could you weep, do you think," said Rosa to me one day, " suppose the house were laid in ruins, and we lay beneath it ? " " Ay, truly ! " said I, " at any hour of the day or night." But I think it was not true ; for during all that time of numbness I never knew myself to shed a single tear.

Now one thing and now another would rouse me for the moment, to sink back into the same slough upon the next. Once it was the requisition that was sent to such as were thought to have victual to spare, to contribute towards the subsistence of the garrison. I was more than commonly well provided, and now that my household was so shrunken, could afford them so handsome a gift that it brought me the special thanks of the Governors and council. That pleased me, as making me feel myself of some small importance once more.

Another thing that happened shortly after Mrs. Holden's

death restored me for a little while to my sense of life; this was the manner of it. Wamphray came in one day to desire my father's presence at the council, where it was being proposed that the magazine should be emptied (the enemy being thought to have information of its whereabouts), and the powder concealed in small quantities hither and thither through the town.

"The old dry well in your garden," quoth he to my father, "hath been thought a very fit place to bestow some of it; should you make any objection?"

"Why, as to that," quoth my father, "there's no man in the world would like to have powder stored in any quantity so near his house at such a time."

For all that, when he returned from the meeting of council he had given his consent to it, and accordingly twenty barrels were brought secretly to the house late that night, the family being all safe abed. 'Twas I that had been desired to open the door to them.

At the very moment it was brought to the door, the enemy, moved by I know not what malign insight, sent off a bomb, which passed humming and whistling over our heads. I promise you there was none of us but had a kindred whistling and humming in his ears, and felt a drumming in his breast, as though his heart had broken loose from its tether, and were galloping away out of danger.

"They're firing at random, of course," said Wamphray. "But, for God's sake, get the powder under cover as quick as we can!"

'Twas a stalwart soldier that stood torch-bearer to the party.

"Here!" says Wamphray. "Take the torch, somebody, and let Simmons lend a hand with the powder."

I stretched my hand for it without a word, and without a word he let me have it.

When it was all within the doors, we breathed more freely; there was a silent pause of a few moments while we listened for the passage of another bomb. But none came.

Wamphray drew a heavy breath.

"Let us get it down to the well, and have done with it," said he; "and that at the best of our speed."

At the word, the men began to carry it through the house, Wamphray himself, and my father, lending a hand.

It scarce seems credible to myself as I relate it, that chance

should take so much the air of premeditation; but at that self-moment when the first of the men set foot in the garden, with the barrel of powder they carried, came the screech of the second bomb; it went wider of the house than the first, and passed harmlessly over the town. But for all that, the sound of it was to the men like spurs to a horse, and enhanced their speed to a point of very fury. Not a moment was lost; the powder was packed away in a marvellous short space of time, though no more bombs were fired while it was a-doing. My one care was to throw the light exactly where it was needed; and it was not till we were come within the house again that one of us so much as remembered that it was I who carried it. And for that night every feeling but exultation at the safe stowage of the powder was driven clean out of my head. But in the morning the dull old megrim had come down upon me once more.

"Work is her medicine," I overheard Wamphray say of me to Rosa.

So it was, and I knew it; but where and how was I to get it? Rosa was the mistress of the house, and even had she not been so, there was now scarce anything for a mistress to do in it. Margery was mistress in the nursery; and with Cicely, nurse to little James, to help her, certainly there was little to do there either. I might play with the children and welcome, if so it pleased me; but if I should venture so much as to tie a shoe-string for either of them, one or other of the nurses was to reckon with. I was become a kind of supernumerary, with neither place to fill nor duty to discharge; 'twas a vile, irksome feeling, and one that, even without other cause of grief, had soon withered up my energies as summer drought withers the grass.

Life was at its flattest, and the savour gone from it, as it seemed, for ever, when there came to our house a visitor from without the walls—my uncle namely, from Ling, to have speech of Adam his son. It was not of his own accord he came to us, as may well be imagined; the thing had been indeed impossible, so closely were we now invested in this the third week of the siege. He came to us, part prisoner, part envoy, from Richard Hamilton, in the custody of two of the Irish troopers; it was a guardianship, to all seeming, effectual merely by reason of his own submission; for all his eighty years, he looked as if he might, with scarce an effort, have taken one of his guards in each hand and thrust them from him right and left. No eye, however

jaundiced, could fail to look with pleasure on the splendid old man; even Adam is scarce equal to him (and there is no one else in all the province that approaches these two) in stature and bearing. ~~was~~

It needs no telling that we were glad to see him—indeed, it was mobbing he got, all of us crowding round him as though it were salvation merely to touch him. The guards were forced apart from him in an instant. Margery had the cleverness to invite them to the kitchen and set them down to a mug of ale apiece, and after that they were content to let their prisoner mind himself.

Prisoner he was indeed, as he lost no time in telling us, begging my father at the same time to send a message to Adam to come to him at our house.

"For," said he, "the less these fellows see of the town, the less they'll know. And, for mine own part, the less I see of your defences, the less I shall be able to satisfy Hamilton, if so be he should take it into his head to question me."

"Why, what right hath he," said my father, "to question one that is a non-combatant?"

"You may as well ask," rejoined my uncle, laughing, "what right he hath to send me into town upon his errands? That is a tyrannous action enough, considering that I'm living under protection, and have his own hand upon it. But they that be forced have no choice, and that's my case to-day. I am here upon an urgent inducement," and at that word he laughed again, "to advise my son Adam upon his conduct towards his Majesty King James and his commissioned officers."

"I am sure you'll never do it," said Rosa quickly, "for anything they can offer you."

"Will I not!" said my uncle, a little grimly. "Wait till he comes, my dear, and you shall hear."

"Why," said my father, "I doubt it will be but waste of breath, brother. Adam is a stiff man of his own mind, and, to be plain with you, I think he is old enough to know it."

"No doubt," said my uncle, with a curious twist of the mouth. "I prepared the mind of the Lieutenant-General for some contumacy on his part. But," said he, looking towards me, "what keeps my pretty Mary there behind you all? Has she forgotten her old uncle? or does she think that Hamilton's bribes may have so corrupted him that he is no longer company for decent folks?"

"Neither, dearest uncle!" said I quickly, and found myself the next moment in mine old place, within the shelter of his arm.

Many and many a time I had nestled there in my childish days. Now it seemed to set me back in them once more.

Adam came presently to us, eager to welcome his father's visit, whatever cause had procured it. There is a great affection and confidence between these two, and we were about to withdraw ourselves and leave them together, that they might talk without restraint. But my uncle kept his arm close about me, and the others took it for leave to stay as well. Adam desired to know what it was that brought his father into town.

"Hamilton's orders," said my uncle briefly, and fixing his eyes on Adam's face.

Adam looked perplexed.

"Make me understand, I pray you," said he. "How came you to be at Hamilton's orders? I thought you were living in safety in your own house, under his protection?"

"Why, so I was," said his father, smiling. "But the Lieutenant-General was so polite as to send a file of soldiers to fetch me this morning, being desirous to obtain my influence with you, to induce you to lay down your arms."

"And that's a pretty request!" said Adam hotly. "If this is how his protections are observed, what confidence could we put in them, supposing we had any inclination to submit?"

"That was what I told him," said my uncle, with a curious intonation that went between indignation and chuckling. "I told him, besides, what I have just been telling your uncle here—that you were a man hard to move, when your part was chosen. 'If you should send an angel from heaven to him with such a proposal,' said I, 'he'd find himself denied, and so I tell you, my lord General.' At that he was so obliging as to say that perhaps an angel from heaven might have less authority with you than your own father, and had the further generosity to promise me a hanging if I refused to exercise it."

"Oh, but this is too much!" Adam broke out, and my father in the same breath. "Does he take us for dolts, that we can't see what value he attaches to his promises? Why should he be more scrupulous in one case than in another?"

"Ah, I told him you'd ask that, too!" said my uncle, laughing again, as though General Hamilton's threat were the best of

jest. "But he desired me to assure you that 'twas in my case alone he would sanction the least infringement of them, and that only because of the extraordinary service I had it in my power to render to his Majesty's cause. 'An extraordinary embassy to an extraordinary man,' was the name he gave it. You, Adam, are the extraordinary man. What do you think of your dignity?"

"Why, the proposal is easy to answer," said Adam, "because there is but one answer fit to be given, and that's No, to it. No! and No! and No! again, whatever the bribe may be, or the threats. But as to sending you back into danger, it can't be thought of, either."

"No," broke in my father; "we shall detain you here, brother, our prisoner instead of his. You won't be the first that hath been sent to us with a message and kept by force."

"You are very kind!" said my uncle quietly. "But I shall take leave to decline your friendly arrest. There's no one at home to take my place, if I stay with you. I shall even dare Hamilton's hanging—in faith, I'm sure there's little danger. Why, I told him plainly that I'd advise you to do the thing that I myself would do in your place, and at your age. And he knew so well what that would be, that he never so much as asked me. 'Tis to satisfy some one else he hath treated me thus, take my word for it."

"Well, now," said Adam, "I think they've tried every inducement on me that they can devise—rank, and gold, and flattery. I did not know I was half so fine a soldier, now, until my Lord Abercorn enlightened me. There was no post good enough for me under a colonel's in James's army; and gold—a thousand pounds to begin with—he showed me some of it. But," said he seriously, "if there's question of your life, father, why, there are fifty men better than I ready to take my place, if I lay down my sword."

I felt my uncle's arm tighten around me at that word, and the throb that caused its tightening was repeated, to my own amazement, in mine own breast. It was ever Adam's way to undervalue himself. What danger might not that fault betray him into?—and us as well? For were he to lay down his sword, who could say how many might follow his example?

My uncle began to speak very deliberately, and in a most quiet voice, continuing the half-jesting tone he had used throughout the interview.

"Adam," quoth he, "I bethink me that I must call my promise to mind, and deliver my soul by advising you according to my conscience. You are my son, and I desire you will consider well what you are about. It's no light matter to rebel against your Sovereign, and they tell me you are the very backbone of this resistance. Consider the kind of king you would renounce—one that never knew what mercy was; never made a promise that he would not break, save to his priests; never thought for himself, and held it damnable sin in any one else to do it. What his pledges of liberty of conscience and pardon are worth, you've just had some instance of, if it hath slipped from your mind how he hath kept the like in other cases. Think what kind of man it is that you would set up in his place—one that is the exact opposite of James in every respect; as faithful as he is merciful; tolerant, they say, to a very fault—ay, and a man that knows how to rule, into the bargain. Think what a change for this poor, distracted kingdom if such a man were set securely on the throne!"

His voice grew deeper and deeper as he spoke; now, when Adam would have answered him, he raised his hand to check him, and the last vestige of lightness disappeared both from his voice and face.

"My son," said he, "it would scarce become me to deny that you may be in a position far beyond your birth and your deserving. But there you are put; and 'twas the very finger of God that did point you out for it. Beware how you quit it, save upon as plain a leading, or else you may find yourself as base a deserter as Lundy. If it should come to a question of my life, as of course it may, remember this for your guidance, that never in my life did I grudge to set my life on a noble venture—'twould be hard to find a nobler than this!—and were you to purchase it by any cowardly compliance I would deny you for my son."

None of us answered him by a single word; only Adam bent his head with a mixture of pain and pride that was beautiful to see. For me, my heart beat in my breast once more, though I knew it not till later.

My uncle's eyes followed me after that, as I moved about him, with a question in them that at last he put.

"What ails this child?" said he to my father; and at the same time he took my hand and drew me nearer him. "Has she been sick?"

My father looked from him to me, as though it were my part to answer : I told him, no, I had not. He looked unsatisfied.

" There's something wrong, I can see," said he. " I suspected it as soon as I saw her, and now I'm sure of it. What is it ? "

Why no one would save me the pain of telling mine own grief, I have often wondered ; but so it was. My uncle looked from one to another, but never a word could he bring from them, and so he was forced to turn again to me.

" What ails my pretty Mary ? " said he again, and drew me to his side with the old manner of protection that I knew so well. It brought me in mind of the times when I used to confess my little childish faults to him, that he might intercede for me with my father ; sure, I never knew him slow to do it. I dropped upon my knees at his side, as though I were in truth the guilty little maid of former years ; but to answer his question was beyond my power : my throat seemed made of wood, and powerless to obey my will.

" Will no one tell me what she hath done ? " said he angrily.

In truth, I believe he had forgotten I was woman-grown, and looked that they should tell him of some little careless fault that had been visited upon me over-sharply. At that, in some odd corner of my mind there shimmered a gleam of tender laughter ; and at that again the frost that bound me was in some strange fashion broken up. All the pent-up pain of weeks came pouring from my heart to mine eyes in a sudden flood. I found my voice again, though 'twas as sharp as the edge of a knife, and hurt me cruelly. What words I made use of I neither knew then nor know now ; but in some frantic fashion I made a shift to tell him all my tale. All—I hid nothing, kept nothing back. I began at the thought of James's desertion, that up till now I had kept locked in mine own bosom, and went on to Lundy's letter and the news of his captivity. Whether the others were listening I neither knew nor cared, but when I was aware of myself again, there was no one in the room but my uncle and me.

He was stroking my hair—it was liker a return to my childhood than ever—I thought he had been stroking it so for hours.

" A soldier's wife must show herself brave, my child," said he.

" I know it ! " said I. " And if it were any ordinary hardship—wounds, wherein I might tend him ; death, even—a man's death on the field of battle—I could be as brave as my neighbours. But death in the Bastille—death from cold and hunger,

very like, with never a soul to shut his eyes—that's hard to bear!"

There was another silence; then he said—

"It is; I should be hard of heart to deny it. But even that pain hath been laid on other women——"

I cast aside his hand that caressed me.

"That's a speech worthy of Mr. Hewson," said I bitterly.

"Sure, I bear no such ill-will to any woman in the world, as to take comfort from her distress."

"Who have borne it bravely," my uncle continued, taking no heed of my interruption.

He looked me in the eyes as he said it; there was both blame and balm in his. There was but one answer that could be made to them; to wit, that I would try to do the same.

"And take this for your comfort," said he, "that men in plenty have been released from prison, even from the Bastille. There's a war in progress; there will be prisoners to exchange; you may rest assured that James won't be forgotten. Were he dead and out of his misery, as you say, he were dead and gone for ever too; as it is, you have his return to hope for, and to look forward to. Yes, to look forward to; I am sure of it; you may be quite certain that he will not be forgotten."

When he presently went away, he left that comfort behind him.

"She hasn't enough to do," he said to my father as he was quitting the house in charge of his guards. And I knew that it was I he spoke of.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE WINDMILL HILL.

THE very next day I began to go abroad again into the streets, for Mrs. Browning sent me a message, desiring I would go and see that child of Thomas Ash's that had been sick before, who now was ailing again. I saw little to disquiet her in the child's health; but I did wonder how she could bear with the fretful timidity of Mrs. Gardner, who was still at the same point where I had left her on the day of Adam's entry into the town—namely, that we had never yet got the better of King James's forces *in the long-run*, and that *we should see what we should see*. 'Twas of no use, that falling in with her proverbial humour. I replied to her that *'tis a long lane that hath no turning*. Her rejoinder was instant and unanswerable, that *they laugh best who laugh last*. She seemed to relish her evil prognostications, and to derive much comfort from her murmurings. Methought she might have reaped a better comfort from the altered aspect of the townsfolk, which now was full of vigour and good cheer—those very men that Lundy had declared could not be brought to face the enemy running to take part in every sally and assault with the zest of schoolboys bent upon a frolic. Far from needing to be urged forward, the task of their officers was to keep them in hand, and for every blow they had been balked of formerly, they now rejoiced to strike ten.

They had a victory, a day or two after my uncle's visit, that must have rejoiced any heart, however timid and distraught. 'Twas on a Monday night, if my memory serves me rightly, in the beginning of May, that the soldiers of the watch at Bishop's Gate, and at the ravelin outside it, heard a noise of blows and a

shot or two ; and presently after the men that had been on out-post duty betwixt that and the Windmill came to the gate clamouring for entrance. They had been set upon in the darkness by a multitude of the enemy, they declared, and beaten out of their posts before they well knew what was happening.

Little could be done that night (for it was, as they say, as dark as a wolf's throat) save to inform the Governors and officers, and to keep the watch at every gate with redoubled vigilance. But at the first peep of the early dawn the wall was edged with eager faces, peering out towards the Windmill ; and there they saw a sight they were nowise prepared for.

Making the most of the short summer night, the enemy was entrenched across the whole breadth of the hill, their lines extending from the bog to the very Strand. They must have wrought like heroes to have done it in the time, though greatly helped by the fences and ditches that were in the line of their works. Some of their cannon were already in position, and they were in the act of mounting more. Plainly, their design was to establish a battery in front of Bishop's Gate, that, playing in concert with the one in Strong's orchard, should rake the city from end to end.

'Twas a project that must be hindered at any cost, and every moment made that a harder task. For, swarming like bees a-hiving, toiling like ants a-building, the enemy were broadening and strengthening and finishing their breastworks before the very eyes of our men.

'Twas a mercy of the greatest, at that moment, that our leaders were at once soldiers who knew their business, and strong men who could make themselves obeyed. Had they been otherwise, assuredly the very fire of wrathful daring that was the strength of our men must have proved their undoing and the ruin of the town. For it was scarce possible to restrain them from rushing out all together pell-mell to make an end of the enemy in front of them (which was but a detachment, when all was said) and so leaving the other gates unguarded ; an easy prey to the rest, who might have entered thereby without the least opposition.

By special grace of Heaven, our Governors and officers had their eyes wide open to that danger, and, since to ask for volunteers had been but to add fuel to their impatience, Colonel Baker began to choose those that should go out, taking ten from each company. Mr. Walker stood the while trying, with a pedantry

of soldiership, to form them into proper military order ; but not many would endure to be so curbed. Most of them ran straight out upon the enemy as soon as they heard their names called ; and, of the rest, many got upon the walls again, and began to shout to the Irish gunners, who now began to fire a shot or two, to spare their pains and their powder.

"Look at the gate ! " they cried. "'Tis open enough ; and why shouldn't it be, when we're ready to receive you at any hour of the day or night ? You'll batter the wall a long time before you'll make as wide a breach."

But, sure, it was not many shots they fired from that battery, the gunners presently finding work enough to do to hold their own with men that were come too close to be shot at.

Mr. Walker and his veterans were fain to follow the rest as quick as they could from the Ferry-quay Gate, for fear of being left out of the fray altogether, which certainly had gone near to break their leader's heart ; for if the man be a bred clerk, he is none the less a born soldier. The proof of it is in the quality of the men that attached themselves to him, who were mostly those that had seen most service, and who knew the peril of over-haste, and how often it comes poor speed in the end. In this engagement, however, the rash ones did most of the work, and reaped most of the credit.

'Twas little short of marvellous how their fury, instead of blinding them to everything but itself, gave them eyes for all that was necessary to be done. Not a ditch nor a hedge did they pass, but they beat out of it, and drove before them to the trenches, some of the enemy's men. Nor did they waste themselves by rushing in one behind another at the point of the battery ; but deployed to right and left along the whole length of the Irish line, in a manner to rejoice the heart of Mr. Walker, had he been among the spectators instead of among the actors.

The point of greatest danger to our soldiers was at the Strand, where the cannonade from the other side of the water had them in the flank. Captain Gunter and his party, affronting this danger with all the gallantry imaginable, rid clean round that end of their line that abutted on the river, and began to roll them up upon their friends. At that, their Brigadier-General Ramsay, seeing their critical condition, brought up his reserve of dragoons to support them. But though these had the advantage of the ground, they were no more fit to withstand the fury of our

onslaught than the foot. After a short encounter, they broke, and began to fly up the hill. General Ramsay, trying to rally them, was slain. At his fall a panic seized the Irish, spreading from one company to another like wildfire. The panic became presently a flight, and the flight a slaughter; nor could all the efforts of their officers either rally them or so much as bring them off in good order.

This was by far the most important battle we had yet fought, and our men came dropping in by little parties at a time near all the afternoon. Every company brought in its spoil of colours (five pair were taken in this engagement), or booty, or prisoners of note. But the chief damage to the enemy was the loss of General Ramsay, which by itself had been enough to balance accounts, had they been the victors and not we. He was buried the next day at the Long Tower, with all the honours of a soldier, our Governors according them a truce for that very purpose.

Cracked crowns were not lacking on our side neither, and one of those that came by such an ornament was my brother Wamphray. A mighty bad patient he made. Faith, only a little more strength in the arm that smote had made him lie quiet enough, and long enough; and so Dr. Aicken told him one day in my hearing, when I was playing nurse to him instead of Rosa, who was quite tired out. The doctor stole a glance at me from time to time, as though he longed to physic me as well as Wamphray. I marked him, in spite of his carefulness.

"These physicians," I thought to myself, with perhaps a little mild contempt, "how thoroughly their own skill blinds them! They think there is no sickness but of the body."

Faith, the good man's insight was better than mine that condemned it, and so I was quickly to find.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked of me a little bluntly, when he had done with Wamphray. "But I dare say," quoth he the next moment, "it's more in the province of Mr. Hewson there below than in mine."

At Mr. Hewson's name I could not forbear a little grimace.

"Since you ask me, Dr. Aicken," said I, "it's neither more nor less than idleness."

The doctor pursed his mouth up into a "whew," and the next moment emitted it; sticking his hands under his coat-tails at the same time, in the manner of one taking a resolution.

"And that's a queer thing, now," said he, "considering that

there's work in plenty, wanting nothing but hands to do it. Ay," said he, catching himself up, "I said wrongly there; it wants heart as well as hands."

Wamphray turned his head as he lay; he said nothing, but evidently he was pricking up his ears. I said I should be glad to learn what that work was whereof the doctor spoke.

"Oh, you'll think me a pagan, I make little doubt," quoth he, "when I mention it. But I'll think you another if you do, and so there will be no waste of compliments. Here's this man, now, hath yourself and his wife, not to mention half a dozen other people, ready to fly at his least groan, giving their whole time to him without a murmur. You should see some patients of mine in the town," he finished, with a gesture of anger.

"I would willingly tend them," said I, "if that's the work you mean."

"Well said," quoth he. "But wait a moment. It's not for our own wounded I'm asking your help—not a blackguard of the lowest of them but has as many nurses as he needs—but the wounded prisoners that have been brought in. Sure, any man might think they were some kind of outcast heathen, with neither body to suffer nor soul to save, to see the way they're shunned. I can't get a proper nurse to them either for pity or reward."

"Am I to understand," says Wamphray, sitting up in his bed, "that you're asking my sister to become nurse-tender to some of those *Irish* blackguards that were brought in the other day?"

"Will you please to keep your head down, Captain Murray," says the doctor very quietly, "else I won't be answerable for the consequences. This business lies between your sister and myself, give me leave to tell you, and you have no concern with it."

"She shall not give you yes for an answer, for all that," says Wamphray, lying down again with a groan, "until she hath taken time to think it over considerably."

"I don't ask it," said the doctor. "But perhaps she will have one ready for me when I come to see you to-morrow." And so he took his leave, but a minute later thrust his head in at the door again. "My way of thinking of them," said he, "is as natural to my profession as your way to yours. Your duty is to get the better of them by hook or by crook; by wounding, or slaying, or anything else. My duty is to patch them up again; and I tell you it makes me regard them as fellow-creatures and fellow-countrymen."

And so was gone in earnest, or ever he heard Wamphray's rejoinder, "Sentimental stuff fit for a woman;" for which, perhaps, he had some justification in the perfidious behaviour of the Irishmen, whereof we had fresh instances near every day. I, having seen less of that than he, was fain to take Dr. Aicken's words to heart and ponder them, and the more I did so the more reason I found to think them true, or, at the least, the fitter model for a woman's following. Like doth draw to like, as the proverb hath it, and pain doth open the door to pity, which is its next-door neighbour. The pain of mind that I had suffered, and was suffering, did open my mind to feel for their pain of body; perhaps that is the best office of adversity, and the rainbow of its gloom. And though that, like the other rainbow, be but sunshine passed through tears, and caught on cloud, doubtless 'tis the bow of a promise as much greater and more glorious than the first as the soul of man is than the senseless vapour.

I thought these things vaguely enough at that time, if I thought them at all; whether or no, they wrought in me so that I was ready to go with Dr. Aicken the next morning. 'Twere easier to fancy than to paint my surprise when he took me—the very first place we went to—to the prison of my Lord Netterville, a gentleman with whom I had already some slight acquaintance. His wound, though painful in the extreme, was nothing dangerous, being the loss of the fingers of his right hand, which had been shot away. I quickly learnt to dress it to the doctor's perfect satisfaction, as well as to that of Margery, my maid and Mentor, who would not permit me to stir abroad upon my new errands without her. I think she will bear me witness that I submitted with a very good grace, and she rewarded me for my obedience by doing all the hardest of the work and giving me all the thanks.

My Lord Netterville, though greatly to be pitied for the loss of his fingers and the consequent helplessness (which irked him, I believe, more than the pain he suffered), was to be envied in one thing—the brotherly kindness of his room-fellow, Colonel Talbot. 'Twas a lesson to the gentlest of us to see how this stern soldier would perform the most trifling services for his comrade, thinking nothing beneath him that could give the poor man ease; bearing, too, like any nurse with her child, with my lord's fretfulness, which sometimes he could not altogether repress. Perhaps here, also, it was pain that was the teacher; for Colonel Talbot, like so many of our own friends, had suffered much from the hardships of the

winter campaign, and often seemed as much in need of tending as his companion.

It may well be supposed that my nursing took me often into the poorest parts of the town, and there already the distress that had been foreseen began to be felt. 'Twas borne with the most unflinching courage and cheerfulness, and the expectation of the relief that might even now be on its way from England made every day a greater figure in the poor folk's thoughts. It had been a cruel thing, as well as thankless, to remind them how much time must pass before these reinforcements and supplies could possibly reach us. Six weeks was the shortest, eight was likelier; and we were now only in the fourth. But those of us that had enough and to spare might surely have a care of such as were poorly off, and keep the delay from bearing too sorely upon them.

My being so much out of doors brought me often into scenes that other women for the most part missed. Many a horrid thing I witnessed that coloured my dreams for weeks; but many a thing also so splendid and heart-stirring that death itself, I hope, will not be able to blot them out of my memory. Once, when Margery and I were making our way home through Bishop's Gate Street, Adam Murray galloped past us on his black horse, now whole of its wound. He passed us with a wave of the hand, and a scattering of sand and gravel from the dis-pavemented street, and was gone through the gate, which stood open ready for his passage. The spirit of curiosity got the upper hand of both of us; we ran as fast as we could to the Royal Bastion; and being mounted upon it, held our breath to see Adam making his headlong way through a perfect lane of gunshot-flashes and smoke. Poor marksmen truly were these Irish, or else he had never passed that ambuscade alive, far less unwounded. Looking further afield, we saw in a moment the object of his haste; 'twas Colonel Blair and his regiment that were scattered hither and thither upon the hill, chasing the Irish sharp-shooters—save the mark!—out of the ditches, and from the shelter of the hedges. The ambush whereof Adam had run the gauntlet must, I suppose, have outflanked them and so escaped their notice. Just over the brow of the hill, and thus out of their view, though visible to any one looking from the vantage of the city wall, was an overpowering force of the enemy; our men were outflanked on both sides, and in a few minutes more they had been completely surrounded. Had the assailants succeeded in falling upon them unwarned, scattered as they were

and unsupported, never a man of Blair's had survived to come within Derry gates again. 'Twas a thing to make one hold one's breath to see them in such jeopardy, and he that rid to take them warning in jeopardy yet greater. Had his horse made a false step, had he been touched by but one of those shots that sparkled round him, then had the most precious life in Derry been fruitlessly cast away—then had his effort failed. He did not fail. We scarce had time to realise the peril ere he was at Colonel Blair's side; and thereafter riding to recall the scattered parties of the men, leaping his horse over hedges and ditches, shouting the word of command in a voice that we on Derry wall could catch some sound of.

After that I had the opportunity to behold Adam as Wamphray had wished I could—to wit, in his capacity as a leader, and in the moment of emergency; indeed, it was a sight to make me proud of my kinsman. Flashing to and fro like wildfire, and with no more thought of his own safety; marshalling the men, so that though in retreat they should present a front, and a warlike front, to their pursuers—it was nothing less than glorious. The blood came tingling into my face after a fashion I had never felt before.

'Twas an anxious moment when they approached the ambushade that Adam had ridden through on his way to them, for the enemy pursued them hotly, and was at their very heels. Yet not too anxious, neither; for they were disposed in a kind of triangle, facing every way, and they kept the order perfectly. When the Irishmen saw their manner of coming on, they judged discretion to be the better part of valour, and were fain to take to their heels right and left in a very pitiful fashion.

Our men entered the gates in perfect order, and without the least appearance of haste; nor did we suffer the loss of a single man in an adventure that might have proved so disastrous.

Adam overtook us, as luck ordained it, while we were going home. 'Tis sure a very womanish weakness, and I blush to set it down, but when I tried to speak to him of his exploit as it deserved, scarce one word could I pronounce, because of that stricture of the throat that torments me whenever I am strongly moved.

"You are disappointed, Mary," said he, "and I can't wonder; for it was very near being a proper engagement; I doubt we had had the worst of it, though, had it come to that. I judged it wiser to bring them off as I did than to encounter such odds;

though, if I had known you were among the watchers, I'd scarce have had the heart to disappoint you.

I contrived to tell him that it was not disappointment kept me silent, but admiration that was like to choke me.

"They did behave wonderfully well," said he, as though it were a new light to him, "for such raw men. They formed up as though they had been drilled to it for years. When we shall have taught them a little caution and a little scouting, they will make as good soldiers as any man need desire to have under him."

I could not forbear to laugh, after what I had just seen, at the thought of the caution they were like to learn from Adam Murray. I could not tell, when I came to think it over, whether I admired or envied him most heartily. To have the right gifts of a soldier, and to be set in the place that calls them forth, is sure great happiness. What joy can there be in a woman's life to compare with that burning one of casting one's life into the scales and plucking forth victory as the counterpoise of its risk?

Set in the midst of such scenes as these, so painful on the one hand, and on the other so heroical, 'tis little marvel if I presently forgot to think of mine own spirits, whether they were dull or hearty. Sick or well, sad or merry, what did it matter? How could I spare time to think of myself when there were so many other and more engrossing things to think of? Once again I felt myself in the centre of the web of events, and was glad and happy to mark the thrilling of its cords.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF THE WINDMILL HILL—THE ENGLISH SHIPS.

FROM the first of my going to see the wounded prisoners, both they and their comrades that were whole appeared to depend greatly upon me for intelligence of what was being done. And little marvel, since from their guards they had one kind of story; and from the surgeon that had leave to visit my Lord Netterville, and the messenger that came to them with their food, they got quite another. They had sure been utterly at a loss what to believe, except for me; for, indeed, I was as far from desiring to give too much credit to our own side as from keeping back any that was due to them, and that they were candid enough to believe.

Owing to this my new business of intelligencer I took some pains to learn all that was going on, and I think I may say without vanity that they might easily have had a worse news-carrier. Of much that I have described I had been an actual eye-witness, and of the rest had the best of accounts from some of the chief of the actors. Many a time I was half ashamed to have no better a story to tell these poor gentlemen of their comrades; not, certainly, that I would have wished the tables turned for their benefit, but when I saw my Lord Netterville how he chafed, Colonel Talbot how he reddened, and Sir Gerard Aylmer how he hung his head, at my tales, I would fain have been able to tell them that their friends had quitted them like soldiers that knew their business. This was but rarely the case, for now their best men were either slain or taken. The soldiiership was all on our side at this time, as they were apt to confess—indeed, I might say to complain.

There was Colonel Nugent, to be sure; he was a fine soldier;

but then his command was not of sufficient importance to allow play to his talents. Had he been in Hamilton's place, I have heard them say, there had been another tale to tell. Perhaps ; and then again, perhaps not. For on the single occasion when he fairly measured himself against Adam (lying in wait at the Danish fort to intercept him on his return from a picqueering expedition) Adam it was who, by his dash and readiness, came off the victor, and scathless.

So curious a freak of chance occurred in that combat that I am minded to set it down. Another officer that was of Nugent's party, charging at Adam, came to close quarters with him, and was killed. In his fall his cloak came unfastened, and the wind, spreading it out, caught it from the dead man's shoulder, and cast it upon Adam's instead. 'Twas a strange thing to see him riding into Derry arrayed in a scarlet cloak laced with gold and silver—King James's livery !

Never a day passed at this time without something attempted either on the one side or the other. A waiting time, they say, is a weary time ; but sure it was not so with us. There never lacked subject of talk among us ; nor subject of rejoicing, neither, for the matter of that. In most of our encounters we were victorious ; I recall but two occasions at this time when the fortune of the day went the other way. One of them was that attempt upon the fort above Creggan, wherein Captain Noble and Captain John Cunningham, pushed on by their own hardihood, went too far within the enemy's lines, and were surrounded and put to flight. It cost the life of poor Captain Cunningham, who was killed by them after quarter promised. The other occasion was more to their credit, though the tardiness of one of their own officers in bringing up the reserve was a good ally to them. It was when, in spite of the utmost our men could do, they established their trenches just on the other side of the bog, quite close to us. After that, they began to hem us in so closely that we could no longer permit our cattle to graze over the bog as hitherto, and had it not been for the wisdom of our Governors in taking in the ground on the Windmill Hill as far as to the mill itself, we should now have been in a very evil case ; for it would have been out of our power to come to Columbkille's Well for water to drink ; and the wells within the walls were so muddied and fouled by the continual firing that the supply from them was scarce fit to be used even for washing.

This the enemy had perhaps got wind of, or perhaps it was but in the ordinary course of a siege that they determined to deprive us of this ground that we had taken in. 'Twas well fortified; they had themselves done much of the work for us on the night before the famous first battle of Windmill Hill. But we, profiting by the hours of darkness, when their cannon from Strong's Orchard could not annoy us, had greatly strengthened their works, deepening the trenches, raising the bank to over seven feet high, and adding redoubts for the proper securing of the whole.

This ground they now resolved to take from us, if might or men could do it. My prisoner-patients gave me unwittingly some inkling of a great design afoot, expressing themselves in the handsomest manner desirous that a composition should be come to between the city and General Hamilton while, as they said, *we were yet in the case to exact conditions and terms*. I told them very plainly that were the Governors to attempt any such treaty, and "the rabble" (I protest I began by this time to glory in the word) to get wind of it, their authority would slip from them like snow from the roof in the sunshine, and they themselves would stand in peril of their lives.

"Why so?" said they. "But 'tis a great pity, for Richard Hamilton is a merciful man, and an easy man to deal with, and the Irishry, when they have the upper hand, *are not*. And," they went on to explain, "there are some in the place that have shown us such friendship, and deserved so well of us, that we should be happy to think them out of the reach of danger."

"Perhaps, then," said I demurely, "if the worst should come to the worst, you won't refuse to stand the friend of such with the Irish at a pinch?"

"It might not then be so easy," they declared.

I left them with a curtsey that had a little mockery in it, could they have known it. An unconquerable trick have these Irishmen of being still victors before the battle. Experience, one might have thought, had gone about to teach them better judgment by that time.

One thing they had learnt, and that was that one man of our rank and file had an easy bargain of ten of their scullogues, but they conceived themselves that among the gentry it was just the contrary. Accordingly, Captain Butler, second son to my Lord Mountgarret, had been at some pains to form a band of gentlemen-volunteers that were to follow him as their captain; and they had

all bound themselves together by an oath to top our rampart on the Windmill Hill, or perish in the attempt. They were now to learn that, man for man, the generality of our officers were equal to theirs in every respect ; and that, matched against the best of ours, they had no more chance than their men.

'Twas on the 4th of June, at low-water in the morning, that they delivered their attack ; and very furiously and gallantly they did it. They rid clean round the end of our rampart that abutted on the Strand, so getting within our lines and coming to thrust of sword with us. At the first, it did verily seem as though they had some magic to their ally, coming unwounded out of the hot fire which our men received them with. Thomas Ash, I heard, had some of the chief credit at this critical moment ; 'twas he that did perceive that they wore armour under their clothes, and shouted it aloud ; whereupon Captain Crooke gave the word to aim at the horses ; when that was done, that combat was to all intents over. Doubtless they came within our line, and doubtless there they stayed ; for between the prisoners and the slain our men accounted for them all but three.

The rest of the horse, seeing how the gentlemen-volunteers were received, had no great stomach to come on ; nor could all the shouting wherewith it was sought to encourage them from their own lines hearten them to do it. Perhaps, however, it was as much policy as fear that checked them ; for now the battery on the other side of the river began to play, flanking our men ; and at the same time their foot delivered a most determined attack upon our centre, and their grenadiers upon our right. Every man of the front rank carried a faggot, which they cast into the trench to fill it up. The foot were quickly disposed of, they having miscalculated the soldiership of ours in a surprising manner, considering what they had seen of it. They imagined, it should seem, that our men would fire a single volley all together ; and meant to rush in while they were reloading, mount our breastwork, and overcome its defenders by sheer force of numbers. Instead of this, our men divided themselves into three, or four, or even five parties, according to the number and fury of their assailants, and delivered their fire by turns, picking off their men with the utmost coolness. Their fire, thus continuously maintained, disconcerted their opponents so completely that they were fain to take to their heels ; each man going off under the protection of a comrade's body, which they hoisted on their backs by way of shelter from our

fire. Some, that came on with more determination, and succeeded in mounting our bank, found themselves hauled over it by the hair of their heads, and so made prisoners. On the right of our line, it appeared at first as though the grenadiers were about to count a victory as an off-set to the defeat of their comrades. They also were provided with a front-rank of faggot-bearers, to make passages for them across our trench, and so hotly did they come on that our men were put to flight; the redoubt at that point was left empty for some minutes, save for one little boy, that stood upon the bank and threw stones at the enemy as they were laying their faggots. But the men that had fled, being reinforced from the city, returned very valorously upon their assailants before they had time to make good their footing, threw them quickly into confusion, and pursued them over the bog with great slaughter.

In this action Colonel Baker showed himself to deserve the name of General rather than of Governor; he displayed the qualities that go furthest in the winning not of battles merely, but of campaigns. Standing upon the Double Bastion, he kept a watchful eye upon every part of the field; wherever reinforcements were needed, thither he immediately despatched them; where the ammunition ran low, he sent it as promptly. And they that offered themselves to be his messengers were none other than the women and children, venturing themselves with all the coolness of veterans to take food and drink, match, and even powder, to the men, and that through the hottest of the fire.

Very disconsolate were my friends among the prisoners when next I saw them; humbled, and ready to confess the prowess both of our leaders and of our men. My Lord Netterville endeavoured to make light of his chagrin; Colonel Talbot, whose discomfiture went too deep for such pretences, took him to task for it.

"Don't I know you, Netterville," said he, "and that your feeling about it is the same as my own?"

"What's that, I pray you?" quoth Lord Netterville.

"Why, merely that you'd pawn one half of your life with joy, for leave to spend the rest in fair fight against these rebels, like Butler and Macdonnel on Tuesday," quoth he, with bitterness; and then went pacing to and fro through the room, chafing in his vexation like a caged lion.

"And that's a mighty unfriendly name you give us," said I,

partly to divert his thoughts from what he could nowise alter. But he took no notice of my challenge.

"That Colonel Murray, now!" said he. "I understand, madam, that he is a kinsman of yours. It's not to be pleasant to you, I assure you, that I say I know not the thing I would not pay for leave to measure myself with that man!"

"To be pleasant to me!" I said, unable to forbear a smile. "I should think not, indeed, when you express such rancour against my kinsman."

"Ah, madam," said he, "you don't understand. That's as far from rancour as east from west. It's not hatred, but a kind of love, that prompts that wish; and I assure you if any man said the like of me, I'd think he was paying me the highest compliment in his power."

"For all your successes," said my Lord Netterville to me presently—"and, credit me, I'd be the last to belittle them—this struggle can have but one end. Your valour, your devotion—which, sure, are worthy of the heroes of antiquity—what can they do in the long-run, save to add to the bitterness of your doom? Do you think we are ignorant—or that our friends in the camp can be ignorant—how scarce and dear your provisions are growing, even now? What can one town do, however resolute?—or how long can it hold out against the united resources of two kingdoms?"

I led him towards the window, which commanded a view of the cathedral tower—and that was crowded with men, looking in the direction of Culmore.

"You see, my lord," said I, "how 'tis populated, as one might say. What do you think they're looking at?"

Assuredly, I had no desire to exult over a fallen enemy. But I fear there was some tone in my voice—or else perhaps I stole a furtive glance of triumph towards Margery—that betrayed my feeling; for he reddened.

"How should I know?" said he. "May I pray you of your courtesy to inform me?"

"They are looking at ships that are lying in the Lough, my lord," said I. "And we have good reason to think that these are English ships, laden with troops to reinforce us, and victual to relieve us withal."

"That," says my lord, "of course alters the complexion of affairs entirely."

I left them quite cast down, to think that we were out of the reach of being reduced; that their friends should now have little chance to retrieve their failures. I went forth into the streets to find our sober townsmen gone wild with joy—men that had no acquaintance shaking each other by the hand for the sympathy of a common deliverance. There was nothing in men's mouths, there was nothing in men's thoughts, but rejoicing and thankfulness, that now our troubles were past; our difficulties surmounted; our relief at hand.

That they came not into the river next day took little from our confidence; for were they not *there*—in our sight, within reach, if not of our messengers (since the river-banks were lined with the enemy) yet of our signals, which came to the same thing? If anything were needed to assure us how near victory was come to our doors, 'twas the tidings that one Doolan brought that night to the walls, that my Lord Galmoy was in the article of striking his camp, as knowing that now persistence in the siege was no better than waste of time and pains.

But day after day passed without the least attempt on the part of the fleet to reach us—day after day, while we signalled our necessity to them without response. What to think we knew not. My Lord Galmoy's camp sat down again, and so continued. The bombardment went on more vigorously than ever. And then rumours began to reach us that were very uncomfortable. One of the enemy's officers, it was said, had been entertained at dinner by the Admiral himself. What good to us could that portend? or, taken in connection with the delay, did it not justify the feeling of doubt and suspense that now began to grow into a kind of agony?

It was fated to be an agony that certainty should add to rather than diminish. Nothing, they say, is so hard to bear as the heart-sickness of hope deferred. Credit me, they that say so have never known the heart-sickness of hope withdrawn.

That frequent attempts were made to send a messenger to them needs scarce be stated; would we see our hope fade to despair without an effort to realise it? Many a man left the city determined that if Kirke loitered in sight of us without making one attempt to reach us, it should not be, at least, without knowledge of our straits. Alas! it was but the loss of one precious life after another, and all equally in vain. All was fruitless. The enemy, that now had no longer the confidence to meet us in the field, had

yet the guile to frustrate all our attempts to communicate with the fleet. There was nothing for it but to wait the progress of events with all the fortitude we could muster up.

At last, one morning, there was observed a movement among the ships in the Lough; and forthwith the walls, the church-roof, the tower—every point of vantage, in short—was packed with the densest crowd that ever had filled it yet. They that could do no better stood in the streets, awaiting the words of tidings from them that could see what the ships were doing. The enemy perceived their opportunity, and began to fire upon the masses of people. What cared they? Not a straw. The cannon-balls might have been snowflakes for all the effect they produced on the men of Derry, assembled (as they tremulously hoped) to witness the approach of their deliverance. Think what was their agony to see the ships, freighted with salvation, drop slowly down the Lough, and so into the open and out of sight. It was a kind of death. Strong men fell a-sobbing, and thought no shame of it; women cast themselves on the ground in the open streets, crying in the bitterness of sheer despair. No riot, nor shrieking, nor sound of cursing was heard; the people were not enraged, but stunned. One question was asked by many and many a voice, "Is Lundy with them?" If he was not, sure the spirit of his treason was.

After a blind, purposeless, hopeless fashion, the folk began to turn their faces homeward. Homeward! What homes had the half of them, now that so much of the city lay in ruins? Dens among the rubbish; lairs under shelter of the walls, where they thought themselves safest from the cannon-balls and bombs that harassed them night and day.

A voice rose shrill and clear above the sound of the grieving—some say it was the voice of a traitor; for my own part, I think it was the voice of some man maddened by despair.

"Let us go and make terms with General Hamilton, since better may not be!" it cried.

No one could have foreseen the effect of it upon the crowd; it was as though he had shouted a thrilling battle-cry. The bowed heads were tossed erect; and the sound of weeping ceased. Men and women together took up the watchword Adam Murray had taught them; it rose from streets and walls in a solid shout that drowned the roaring of the cannon: "No surrender!"

Again and again they rang it out, so that the enemy in his

trenches must have heard the very words. "No surrender! no surrender! no surrender!"

And now it was no passing enthusiasm, for they had counted the cost of endurance to the end.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TROUBLES THICKEN.

RICHARD HAMILTON had now two great powers to his allies—hunger and heart-sickness; and they speedily brought about a change in the temper of our men that it was out of the power of his arms to effect. This was the change from the happy gallantry that looks upon danger as a frolic and on hardship as a jest, to the sad fortitude that must spend itself in the patient endurance of necessary evils. The one temper is as heroical as the other, no doubt; but, alas! the second hath little life in it compared to the first. And this we quickly discovered from the way the people began to drop around us, victims at this time less to privation than to disappointment and despair.

One of the first to fall was Colonel Baker, the loss of whose life—most precious to us—lies at nobody's door but Kirke's. 'Tis true, the man had come into the town from Coleraine with health much shattered by that spring campaign upon the Bann which had destroyed so many. Ghastly ill he looked often enough, when going about in the town in pursuance of his duty. But the successes of our troops had done wonders for him. He began to have more colour in his face and more vigour in his goings with every engagement we came well out of. When the rest of us went out of our wits with joy at the sight of the English ships, Colonel Baker looked near as well and strong as ever he did in his life.

But as soon as the hope of a speedy end to our conflict was taken from him, 'twas the beginning of his death. A day or two after Kirke turned his back on us, 'twas known that Governor Baker kept his room; next it was his chamber he was forced to keep; and then his bed, from which he never rose,

Then was the time for Mr. Walker to show what manner of man he was. So he did, and it was a man of an excellent spirit he shone out. To speak the truth, many of us had thought this gentleman too much of a soldier for his cloth. We excused it by supposing that his natural bent was to the military life, and not the clerical. Now we had reason to think ourselves dull and mistaken, and to see that it was not soldier and no parson he was, but soldier and parson both. He acquitted himself nobly, to my thinking. Many thought him meddlesome, declaring that he went far beyond what he had warrant for, both in his governorship and in his ministrations; trenching upon what was the business of other people, and none of his. 'Twould have been more becoming in these cavillers to give thanks, that, where so many were dejected and cast down, one man, at least, felt our reverses as a spur and call to action.

Wherever despondency was to be combated, that was the place to look for Mr. Walker, ready both with encouragement and reproof; showing how, since battles were not to be won without wounds, so neither was a siege to be sustained without privation and distress; reminding them how worthy of such pains was the cause; how faithful and able their Defender; how precious the trying of their faith, whereby they should shine out hereafter brighter than gold. And never, I think, did the noble hearts he spoke to fail to respond to his words. The sparkle might be gone from the fire, but not its heat; the brightness from the blade, but neither its edge nor its strength.

What need we began to have of all the steel our temper owned, let the prisoner tell that hath seen his fetters a-making, and felt them being riveted on his limbs. For Kirke had been simple enough (or astute enough) to let slip among these enemies of his that were his friends some hint of the fear that withheld him from attempting the river, which was, that he had heard that a heavy boom had been laid across it, to bar the passage to ships. The enemy was not so dull but that they could take a lesson, and they began immediately to put his bugbear into shape.

Full in our view, too. Many an evening, returning, very like, from some of my nursing, I found the wall lined with citizens, looking on at the making of that great prison-bolt. And strange it was, under that perfect summer sky, from which peace breathed down visibly over the earth, to see men so bent upon compassing each other's destruction. Stranger still, when one came to think

of it, that it was the religion of peace that set them so by the ears.

The first boom they made came to nothing, spoilt chiefly by its own strength. It was made of strong great beams of oak, clamped and bound with iron, and wrapped about with a cable of twelve inches thick ; and by reason of its weight it would not float on the surface of the river, but hung suspended in the water. And as if the river, that had been given us for our protection, would not lend itself to our undoing, no sooner was it finished than there came a great tide, that broke it all to pieces ; upon which the enemy went to work incontinent, and built another of fir, strengthened and secured in the same manner. That floated. After that the river was barred to purpose, and he that would come to us by way of the sea had an obstacle indeed in his path.

And now, as if to complete our discouragement, came the news that Marshal von Rosen was expected day by day at the enemy's camp. The accounts we had heard of this officer's ferocity and ability were enough to terrify any courage ; and the prisoners gave us to understand that the worst that was said of him was rather behind the truth than beyond it.

Not one of those I knew failed to inform me how deeply he desired we would make our composition with General Hamilton, so as to be out of the reach of the cruelties that might be practised on us if we were forced to capitulate to Von Rosen. I would represent to them that the city must first be taken before these atrocities could be applied to us ; at which they would shake their heads, as men that understood that the battle was to the strong, and deplored our blindness to our own interest.

We were not long in doubt about the arrival of this redoubtable commander after he was on the spot. There was an immediate increase of energy that told its own tale. The enemy's lines, which had once already been moved nearer to us, were brought nearer still. The bombardment grew much brisker, as many as forty bombs being fired into the city in one day. Sixteen new forts were erected round about us, and mounted with cannon ; they battered us day and night with cannon-ball, many of them red-hot, which did a deal of damage. The city appeared to rock to its foundations to the noise of their artillery, and it was no uncommon thing for a house to tumble down about the ears of its owners. As to the Diamond House, that was

gone; battered into such utter ruin that the inhabitants carried away for firewood the fragments it was beaten into. Many people would no longer trust themselves within house-walls, but lay at night under the shelter of the wall of the city or of the rampart on the Windmill Hill; and to this practice my good friend the doctor said he traced much of the illness that now began to vex the town.

What rendered this attack peculiarly hard to bear was the want of bullets to return it, for now our supply began to run short. Worthy Mr. Watson—sure, never had men in our case a better master-gunner; Monsieur Pointis was but a child to him—made a shift to supply the want with balls of brick coated with lead, wherewith he contrived to do more execution upon the enemy than they with their iron balls heated red-hot upon us.

The prisoners were most eager to learn from me, whenever I went to see them, what effect all this severity produced upon the temper of the citizens—whether they were like to be terrified into submission or no. Faith, I grew prouder of my countrymen every time I had to describe their firmness; for all the Marshal had done was to increase their resolution by the addition of a certain angry constancy that was very noble. The prisoners professed themselves very sorry to hear it, and protested that their sorrow was evidence of their friendship for us.

"For," they would say, "the delay will but add fuel to the flame of Rosen's anger."

"I scarce can see," I would reply, "what harm that should do us, or how he can express it save by bombarding us yet more vigorously. At that rate, he will soon be out of both bombs and cannon-balls."

Colonel Talbot would shake his head at my levity.

"Madam," he would say, "you don't know the man you're dealing with. Before you know what you are doing, he will turn upon you with some new device, so devilish brutal, and at the same time so ingenious, that you'll have nothing for it but to yield, and then—God be good to you! My heart bleeds to think of my countrymen being treated like the poor wretches in Pultowa. Rebels, to be sure, deserve to suffer, but flesh and blood must feel for flesh and blood."

Once I could not forbear reminding him how far he had been out in his forecast of our fortunes on the day of their great effort to crush us. He admitted it without demur,

"But," said he, "you had not then to measure yourselves against one of the ablest soldiers of the age. And you had the hope of the English succour to sustain your courage. Now you have had some evidence of what they mean by you; they're no better than lukewarm in their friendship, and you've seen it. Say as you please, madam—and that's as you think, I am sure—it must have taken the heart from their resistance."

There was enough of truth in that to put me in some pain for our fate, at such times as I was hearing it all set forth. For it was true that Kirke's retreat had done more to break us than the enemy's arms—ay, and that in more ways than by discouragement. Many of us, in the joy of sudden and certain relief—so we thought it—had been prodigal of the stores we ought to have husbanded, and up till that time had husbanded, with the greatest care. 'Twas an error of the most fatal; we saw it in all its greatness when it was too late to repair it.

But never did my despondency withstand the first glimpse of the resolute mind of my countrymen. Whether aided from England or left to do their best with their own slender resources, made little difference to the wholeness of their devotion. Each man had set his life on this wager, so it appeared; he would not withdraw it, whatever the odds. Nay, the more overwhelming the odds, the higher rose his heart to defy and condemn them.

For all that, things were come to a sad pass when they risked two lives so valuable to them as Adam's and Captain Noble's upon a single venture. And that was what they now were so desperate as to do.

Tidings must be got to Kirke, all were agreed, of the straits we were brought to; the problem was, how it might be done. A messenger had been found that was willing to endeavour the journey, if means could be devised to get him through the lines of the enemy. 'Twas a little lad—the same that stood so stoutly on the rampart at the side of the bog, and threw stones at the grenadiers as they were coming up. But, consider as they might, our leaders could at first hit upon no plan that seemed feasible, so close were we hemmed in, and so actively watched.

But yet, they must get the message sent. A messenger from Kirke had contrived to get to us by swimming across the river, so that it was known where he had retired to, which was no further away than to Inch. Many a man of ours would have been ready and willing to attempt the swimming of the river, and did

attempt it, too, when Kirke lay in the Lough ; but now what good end were served by it, since, when the river was swum, they were but in the enemy's lines the same as before ?

Adam and Wamphray, and many another of our captains that we saw much of, went about very moody at that time. If we asked them what they mused upon, it was hard to know what to make of their answers. At last we were given to understand that an enterprise was on foot to rob the fish-houses upon the Isle ; and that the boat—there was but one in Derry—was to be made use of.

It had been newly built, to replace the one, the only one, our runaway friends had left us when they went away in Cunningham's fleet, of which the enemy had possessed themselves in a manner that is worth relating, because 'tis a good instance of their dealings with us, and the faith they observed with heretics. They sent a message to one Captain White, of ours, to desire he would attend a parley—with Lord Lowth, no less—at the Water-side. He did so, and they took him prisoner for his pains, and kept the boat ; and so sat safe, as they thought, from any molestation by us at that side of the river. But our men set to work and built them another boat—the boat that now was to be adventured upon an expedition to procure the garrison a change of diet.

It started, according to the plan, as soon as night was fallen dark ; but the nights in June are rarely dark enough to let a party pass unseen through their enemy's lines, and this was what our boatful of volunteers meant to attempt, not the fish-houses. Their little messenger was aboard, and their design was to land him at Dunnalong, above the besiegers' camp, so that he might go across country to Inch behind their backs.

It was no better than a forlorn hope from the first. The clear summer night betrayed them to their adversaries, so that they were pursued both by land and water, and hotly fired upon. By the time they came to Dunnalong, 'twas plain that their design was hopeless ; so they were even fain to turn back and come to blows with two boats much greater than their own that were chasing them. One they put to flight, and the other they took captive with all the men that were in her, and towed her in to Derry in the morning. But this was a defeat disguised, for the thing they had at heart they failed in. None of them were killed ; but Adam was so battered about the head with bullets

that had struck his helmet that he kept his chamber for several days after. And word reached our ears, by one means and another, that Marshal von Rosen was so enraged by this and other instances of what he called our contumacy, that he had vowed to do such a thing to us as should bring us to our knees with the halter round our necks.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MARSHAL VON ROSEN'S DEVICE.

WHAT could he mean to do ?

Every woman of us put the question so often that our very fears began to grow stale through repetition. And then we took to putting it to our friends ; when by some good chance, in the growing press of business, they had any time to spend with us. Mr. Hewson set his wits to work to find us an answer, but fruitlessly. Adam Murray met our conjectures with one of his great, good-humoured laughs.

"It is but one of his threats," said he. "He cannot give them up ; they're part of his battery. And he can't bring himself to imagine how little we are terrified by them."

Wamphray was as much puzzled as we.

"He is doing his utmost now," said he. "His lines are as near us as he can bring them without exposing his men to our musket-fire as well as our cannon. We are cut off from intelligence by sea ; and where news can't pass, there's little chance for anything more substantial. That he is mining we know well enough. They make no secret of it, going about in sight of us with picks and shovels in their hands. But we are on our guard, and the cellars near the walls are patrolled as regularly as the street. They had a fair example of that, too, last night."

"How was that ?" we asked him.

"The people in one of the houses thought they heard the sound of their picks, and reported it to the Governors, who gave directions to drive a counter-mine, which was done. Last night they came through upon each other, and of course fell to blows in their burrows ; theirs, being surprised, had no chance from the

first, but were routed ; all but one or two of them that were killed."

"No prisoners?" I asked.

"Faith, no!" said Wamphray. "We have no desire for any more of these, unless they be of consequence sufficient to have their diet sent into them."

"Then, you can't tell any more than we, what are like to be Rosen's intentions?"

"To fright us, I believe," said he, as Adam had said before him. "He can't poison the wells, because he can't get at them; and even a barbarous Muscovite hath, sure, some rags of a conscience. Mining, enclosing, and battering he is doing his best at now, unless, perhaps, he hath some new bomb of unheard-of destructiveness to produce. That's the only thing I can imagine that comes within the resources of civilised warfare."

What none of us took into consideration was that the restraints of civilised warfare were but a name to this Livonian wild beast, and no check upon his ruthless ingenuity. What his plan was was made known to the council under his own hand and seal upon the last day of June; it sent them home with white faces and angry hearts. But so impossible did it seem to them that he could mean any more by it than a vain threat, that they fell, some of them, to making a mock at it.

Several of them came with my father to our house, and there held a conference of which a word or two came to Rosa's ears and mine; but nothing we could make sense of. It was ended by Wamphray, who desired they would make their minds easy—"for sure," said he, "there's no man that hath the least regard for his reputation who would commit such a piece of poltroonery!"

"There is no one," returned my father, "who had the least regard for his reputation that would so much as propose it."

For my own part, and enlightened by the accounts I had received of the Marshal from some that knew him, I could not but fear that those who gave him credit for any compunction were over-sanguine, and would find themselves mistaken. Speaking of it the next day to my friends among the prisoners, I was confirmed in this view of his character. They knew not what the thing was he had menaced us with, any more than I myself did; but were persuaded that, however bad it might be, it was not too bad for Von Rosen.

"And let me tell you, madam," said Colonel Talbot, "that

your Governors will do very wrong if, from a fancied sense of honour, they compel the townsfolk to reject his terms, while there's time to make them."

"Perhaps," said I, "if there's compulsion in the case, it is the townsfolk that practise it upon their officers."

I had told him the same thing a dozen times; but it was more than he could imagine or believe.

"Will you tell me," said he, "that Hamilton's proposals—which I hear he threw into the city in a dead bomb, upon the chance that so they might get into the hands of the commonalty—have produced no effect upon their minds?"

"This effect," I replied to him, "that if there was the least suspicion that their officers designed to accept them, 'twould be the case of Lundy over again! Their authority would not be worth a minute's purchase; and I'd be sorry to be he that should warrant them their lives."

"It's marvellous!" returned the Colonel. "For I'm told he promised them everything: their lives, their properties; pardon for the past, and protection for the future."

"Everything," I rejoined, "but the one thing they are determined to have, if their lives will buy it. And that is liberty of religion, secured to them by a sovereign who they know will keep his word."

"A mighty boon, truly!" said the Colonel, "considering how much the wisest of us knows concerning these mysteries."

They that were upon the walls early the next morning were speedily enlightened both as to the matter and the reality of the Marshal's threats. Coming over the hill they perceived a great crowd of people, women and children as well as men. Now, 'tis well known for a fashion of the Ultoghs when they go to fight to carry the women and boys along with them; the men slay, the women pillage, despatching at the same time any they come upon that are but wounded. Taking no thought but that this approaching crowd was a mob of that sort, the watch upon the walls brought a gun to bear upon them, and fired it into the thick of them. Their hearts must have stood still in their breasts when their shot was answered by a dismal cry from the oncomers, beseeching them in their own language to spare their kindred that meant them no harm. They looked upon each other with white faces, asking what it meant, and what the Englishry had to do to come under the walls of Derry?

They had presently their answer. Armed men began to come into view at the back of the weary crowd of footsore, faltering country-folk, driving them forward at the bayonet's point; a thing so pitiful to see that some on the walls broke out a-weeping at it. The soldiers drove their prisoners close under the walls, our men not daring to fire at them for fear of hurting their friends. These were the Protestants from the country round about Derry, every one of them with his protection duly made out in James's name, and signed with Richard Hamilton's. Now they were driven from their homes, like cattle to the slaughter, without distinction of age or sex. Some were aged men; some were tender children; some were delicate women with infants in their arms; and some were women less fit even than these for such rough travelling. Privileged non-combatants—ay, and privileged by the enemy's own act and overture—this was how they treated them.

The news of it ran through the town like wildfire. This, then, was what Marshal von Rosen had threatened; this was what our leaders had supposed him incapable of. They knew now of what he was capable, and what his mercy was like to be worth. He that could take our own kindred for his sword, what kind of weapon would he stick to use for his scourge?

In a very short time we were all on the walls, thronging to see a thing which, rather than to see, we had parted with some of our eyesight. The man that had fired the shot at them cursed himself aloud, wishing that the hand might wither that had hurt his friends. At that a clear voice answered to him from the crowd below the walls:

"The Almighty is more merciful to you than your wish, young man," it said. "The shot harmed none of us, your kindred, but slew three of the enemy that drove us."

"Twas the hand of God alone that directed it, then," said one that stood by. "For the shot was fired before we could tell the drivers from the driven."

Never was the mercy of God more needed by any of His creatures than by these hapless folk, when they sat them down in front of the walls of Derry, ready to die for lack of food and shelter; and willing to die rather than to take them at the price of the town's defeat.

Rosa and I were lost in the crowd at first, and could see nothing but our neighbours that hemmed us in; but after a time we found ourselves close to the parapet, and from that vantage we looked

forth upon a very sorry sight. Below us was a group of women seated on the bare ground; but one had thrown herself at length upon it, in a very abandonment, we supposed, of weariness and despair. She was scarce half clothed, and had a shawl wrapped round her as she lay in a manner that hid both her face and form. Another woman sat close beside her, trying to comfort a little tiny child that she held upon her lap. The child hid his face upon her shoulder; we could hear his crying, though it was faint from very misery and fatigue. 'Twas a sight to rend the stoniest heart, and Rosa burst out crying at it.

I take shame to myself to remember it, but with all my pity my heart had room for the basest of selfish thoughts. I was ready to give thanks that in that whole crowd there was no one of mine own kindred by blood! Fellow-sufferers in the same cause, they were akin to me by a tie yet closer; and it was, sure, the meanest heart in the world that took so much as a single moment to recognise it.

My fault was both discovered to me and punished by a single stroke. One that sat bent and listless drew himself suddenly upright; he needed not to turn his face, for with that action I knew him. It was my uncle, and as I was pointing him out to Rosa he rose to his feet, and turned round towards us. Either some movement we made unwittingly, or some other subtler motion of the spirit, drew his eyes to mine. I stretched my hands to him with a cry I could not repress.

"Oh, my dear uncle!" I cried, "what make you from home—from your safe, quiet home on the other side of the river? Why have they driven you here like a brute beast?"

He both answered my question and rebuked it with a gesture of the hand, pointing round upon the whole crowd of his fellows, all alike in evil case; as though he said: "That which hath happened to me hath happened to every one of them as well." The woman beneath me, with the child upon her lap, lifted her eyes to mine, and they were full of a reproach that needed not to be expressed in words.

"Is my son Adam sick?" he asked me, and he spoke in his ordinary voice and with his ordinary manner, "that he's not upon the walls with the rest of the town?"

"He was here a short time ago," I told him.

"He's not far off," said a man that stood near us. "It's nothing but seeking some remedy for this that has taken the Colonel out of it."

"Will you go for him?" said my uncle to this man. "Tell him that I—that his father desires speech of him."

Certes, it was no easy matter to force a way through the throng upon the walls, but the man was gone in an instant. I looked upon my uncle with wonder. There was a power and authority in his manner that were new to me, much as I had always revered and admired the splendid old man. In spite of them my mind misgave me. I wondered what he was about to require of his son. For himself, I knew assuredly, he had never asked relief; but could any man witness the misery of all these helpless creatures—and that with a pity for their sufferings made poignant by reason of his own—without desiring it for them? Were he to ask it of Adam, could Adam refuse? 'Tis true that he was not one of the Governors, but, then, his influence in the council was great. Could he refuse to exert it at his father's request? If he did so, would not that weight, added to their own natural compassion, ensure their compliance? And then what hope for the town?

Living day by day from hand to mouth, as we were now doing, could we hold out a single week with all these additional mouths to fill? It was evident to the most untrained eye that we could not. Von Rosen's plan grew clearer with every moment's pondering. The price of the lives of our friends must be our own submission; and if we should refuse to pay it, we must bear the torture of seeing them die before our eyes of starvation and exposure.

What neither insult nor weariness, neither pity nor indignation, had availed to do to the old man, namely, to break down his composure, the sight of his son effected in one moment. Breath and speech forsook him both at once; he stretched his hands towards Adam much as I had done to him, unable to utter a single word. As for Adam, strong man as he was, and hardened to the sight of suffering, he was as deeply moved as his father, and it was his father who recovered himself first.

He swept his hand around with the same eloquent gesture he had used to me, including all the prisoners in its circuit.

"Do you see them?" he asked. This time his voice had not the everyday calmness he had preserved before, but rang out like a trumpet. "Do you see them? Not a man of them but has King James's written promise of safety; not a soul you see but trusted to that when he remained in the country in Hamilton's power."

The poor people round him looked up at the sound of his voice, and listened, as we did on the wall, in a sort of breathless silence. Here and there among them there burst forth a sudden sob; but it was smothered in a moment.

"Do but look at them now," he continued. "Mothers, some of them with infants but a few days old; children scarce able to walk yet; old men that are all but past it; creatures that are unable to strike one blow in their own defence, much less to molest his army. Do you know that they were torn out of their beds betwixt the dark and the daylight; not permitted the time to take one bite to eat, neither sitting nor standing, neither themselves nor their children? Do you know why they've been driven under your walls like galley-slaves? That you may feed them with the last of your victual, and so have no more power to resist the thief of the world that has done this in the face of his own promise."

There was a muttering here and there around us at these words, but it was checked in a moment as my uncle lifted his hand. He had more to say.

"Would you do it?" he asked, passionately. "Adam—you are a man of some authority, as I'm told—would you give your voice for taking us in? Would you feed us with your means of holding out? Would you, now?"

He paused, as if waiting an answer, but never a word did Adam return him. A sharp dry sound like a sob broke from him that I think he scarce was conscious of, and that was all his answer.

"Because if you do," said the old man, and now he spoke with a calmness as great as his late vehemence, "it is our curse you will earn, and not our blessing. Take good thought that the cause is ours as much as yours. We were too weak, most of us, to fight for it as you can, but we can die for it just as well as you. This is *our* opportunity, and by the Lord that made it for us—ay, and us for it—we adjure you, do not grudge it to us."

The silence he had imposed continued for a second or two after he ceased speaking, and was then resolved into such a broken cheer as was a fitting answer to such an entreaty, the poor folk round him joining in it to the best of their power. Only the woman below me lifted a face that had some dissent in it.

"Ah, sir," said she, "it's main hard on the children."

My heart melted as she said it, with a pity that was almost a bodily pain.

And now the faces that had been turned to my uncle looked one

and all towards Adam ; sure, it was not out of any doubt of his answer. His voice was near as low and faltering as a maid's, so that only a very few could have heard his words.

"Father," said he, "I thought you were going to plead for them. I know not how I could have endured to refuse you if you had. . . . I know not whether the hard necessity grows easier or harder when you acknowledge it so frankly. Sure, men that sacrifice their lives so nobly to the cause have a double claim on us. But, as you say, even our duty to the weak and helpless must give way to our duty to this cause. But stay," said he, and upon that word his voice rang out full and clear, "there must be a way, if one could but find it."

With that he turned about and was gone through the crowd like an embodied thunderbolt.

I whispered Rosa, and followed him at another kind of pace. The moaning of the hungry child beneath me was become a thing I could bear no longer. Our house was near at hand ; I ran to it and brought a loaf of bread and a little bottle of milk, and with some little difficulty made my way back to my place, the crowd being most willing to let me pass ; though it cost some effort, they stood so close together. Then I lowered the basket as secretly as I could to the woman's hand, having first succeeded in catching her attention. She thanked me by a look, as Rosa did by a little sigh and a quick pressure of the hand. Well she knew that her own child as well as mine must be deprived of that which I had given to the strangers, for milk by this time was scarce to be bought for money. But grudging it was the last of her thoughts, as I had known it would be.

We watched our pensioner feeding her child in a furtive, stealthy fashion, afraid to speak to her lest we should betray her ; for what I had given to her, though enough for one or two, would have been lost among a number. By-and-by we saw her hand steal under the shawl that hid the face of the woman she sat beside, who still lay prone upon the ground in the very same place and attitude as I had seen her first. I marvelled a little at that stillness, and more at the length of time her friend's hand remained in touch of her without exciting the least movement or response.

"She must be asleep," said Rosa softly.

I nodded.

But, as if some doubt of that had suddenly assailed her friend, she put her own child quickly from her, and drew away the shawl

that hid the other's face. And then she gave a faint cry of dismay.

"Oh, what's this—what's this?"

We stooped towards her.

"What is it," I asked her—"a swoon?"

She looked up to me with a blanched face.

"Ah, madam, it's no swoon," said she, with marvellous quiet; "this is death; and sure, it is no wonder."

My uncle, who was not far off, came up to her with some offer of help. She took his hand and wept upon it.

"God bless you for the kindest heart, sir," said she; "but none of us can help her now. Ah, sir, you might as well have left her to lie where she dropped at first," she ended bitterly.

"Was she, then, so sick?" I asked unsteadily.

Without speaking a word, she turned the shawl a little further back, showing me within the clasp of the dead woman's arm, and pressed close to her bosom, a tiny infant, dead like the mother.

"Four days old, lady!" she broke out; "and they raised her out of her bed and hurried her here like the rest of us. She'd never have got half-way but for this kind gentleman's arm. She slipped and fell upon the hill over there—ah, bad luck to the hard hearts that made her climb it!—and the babe's head must have struck a stone, I think—'twas living, but that was all, when we put it back into her arms. The soldiers threatened her with their bayonets if she lagged behind. Ah, God's mercy! what's this?" she cried. "It hasn't been at threats they stopped, wolves that they are!" With that she raised the dead woman's arm, so that we could see it; it had indeed been wounded with some sharp weapon that had pricked it sorely. "Would you think, ladies," she said, crying sorely, "that mothers' sons could find it in their hearts to treat a mother so?"

With that she caught up her own child, that had been all this time crying unheeded, and began to smother it with tears and kisses.

"What was she to you?" I asked her, shocked unspeakably at the sight of such awful cruelty.

"My sister, madam," said the woman—"my only sister."

Drowned in tears as she was, she yet took thought to offer a piece of bread to my uncle, who refused it.

"It's a mistake," said he, looking at us with his brave eyes.

"Our pains will be the sooner over the less we try to escape from them."

Presently we were aware of a stir among the people on the wall; the poor folk below could see the cause of it, but not we, who were too much closed in by the throng we stood in. But in a minute more we heard a voice ring out like a trumpet, "Clear the Double Bastion, there!" 'Twas Colonel Mitchelburne's voice, our new Governor in Baker's place; this was one of the first of his public actions. And the bastion, we heard those say that could see, cleared itself as though a bomb had fallen upon it.

Then could be heard a noise of hammer-blows upon wood; 'twas a maddening thing to listen thereto and see nothing. But chafe as we might, there was no help for it; we could but wait in what patience we could muster, until the knowledge filtered through to where we stood that 'twas a gallows our Governors had given orders to erect, and were witnessing the making of. When it was ready to rear up, had a thousand pair of hands been needed to raise it, they had all been found, ready and eager, on the spot. When it was fixed in its place, Mitchelburne's voice rang out again so that all of us could hear it, as well as the poor Protestants to whom he addressed himself.

"If you die there," said he, "our prisoners die here. We shall either save you or avenge you."

Mr. Walker's well-known voice struck in as Mitchelburne's ceased. It was to us on the walls he spoke.

"And I would represent to you," said he—"I and my colleague, that is—that, to give this our device the smallest chance in the world of succeeding, you mustn't *be seen* to give any assistance to our friends on the outside of the walls. Rosen's purpose is evident, and if he sees we are answering it by helping the others, he will never come to terms with us. If he thinks us as hard-hearted as himself, he may also think it as well to save the lives of his friends that are in our hands by letting ours go home in peace."

Mr. Walker's mode of saying these words "be seen" was clearly designed to convey a warning and a permission at once. That the latter was taken advantage of to the utmost our means would allow, no one with a heart in his bosom will require to be told.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RESULT OF VON ROSEN'S STRATAGEM.

THERE was not one of our officers but was sincerely sorry for the gentleman they were forced to treat with so much rigour. They were in no way guilty; they had neither been partakers in Rosen's perfidy, nor had they consented thereto. It was nothing but the necessity they lay under to save our poor friends at all costs (if, indeed, it might at any cost be done) that had moved them to threaten them with such a fate.

For my own part, how could I but grieve for persons that were of mine acquaintance—nay, by this time almost my friends—and that were in a plight so evil? There was but one moment of all that day, I think, that my mind was drawn away from the thought of them and of our own friends below the walls, and that was when our children would scarce eat their food for want of the milk to which they were accustomed. Rosa and I took each her son upon her knee, and told them as well as we could why it was there was none for them. It was no hard task to make them understand, nor yet to make them try to eat their dinner of porridge without it; but the appetite would not answer to the will. The little boys wished to eat as heartily as usual, but they could not. With a stab of the heart, I saw for the first time that they were pining—small wonder, in a town so fetid and unwholesome as Derry was growing. A day in the fresh country air—in our own pleasant garden, say—was what they needed. Alas! the air of the country was as impossible to procure for them as any other childish luxury, and by this time Derry was bare of such.

The children being fed, however poorly, back came our thoughts to the poor Protestants outside of our walls, and the poor

prisoners within. Wamphray, I knew, had orders to attend the Governors to the lodging of these latter. I made so bold as to ask him to take me there before them.

"For," said I to him, "if there's any little service I can render them at such an awful time, it were some assuagement of my compassion to do it. And I shall never have another chance."

The pleasure of the prisoners—I found several of them together, in company with my Lord Netterville—was so great, upon my arrival, that it made me altogether ashamed.

"Madam," said Colonel Talbot—it was he that commonly made himself their spokesman, in spite of the superior rank of some of the others—"see here. This letter is for your hands." In effect, he delivered one to me. "We made so bold—dying men, you know, are apt to assume privileges that perhaps they have no right to—as to ask you to favour us with one more visit before we are taken to Newgate, which, of course, would be no place for you to come. And now, in your goodness of heart, you have forestalled the request."

"My goodness of heart," I said with a smile, though a doubtful one, "would be happy—very happy—if there were any little thing I could do for you; but I fear there's none."

"None!" quoth he. "To you, madam, perhaps, what you have done for us may seem nothing. To us, what hath it not been? Fresh air, and health, and liberty—*very near!* The burden of our gratitude was one we were unwilling to carry to the grave unspoken. Now you have added to the list of your bounties this last one, to give us the opportunity to confess our debt, though we can't discharge it."

"An angel," murmured Sir Gerard Aylmer, "could not have been more heavenly kind!"

What had I done for these gentlemen? Nothing, save to treat them as fellow-creatures, though they had been in arms against us. Ah, sure, when so slight a thing can move men to so great thankfulness, there must be easier ways to arrange their differences than by battle!

There came a noise at the outer door of men asking and receiving admittance, and presently entered to us Mr. Walker, attended by two or three more of the council. I would have withdrawn myself with my maid; but it was desired I would not, and I was nothing loth to remain.

Mr. Walker entered at once upon the business that brought him, which was to require the prisoners to be in readiness to be removed to Newgate, in preparation for the execution. 'Twas but an ungracious task, and so he felt it; for the words came by no means so trippingly from his tongue as commonly, and he seemed shorn of half his self-importance.

Colonel Talbot answered him something haughtily.

"Make no apologies, sir, we beg of you. We have been aware of your intentions all day; they were reported to us near as soon as you had announced them on the walls. We are in your power, to do as you please with, and can't help ourselves."

He looked at Adam Murray as he said that last, who reddened angrily, but answered nothing. My Lord Netterville, feeling, I suppose, that the implication were scarce justified, made haste to soften it.

"We are all sensible, gentlemen," said he, "of the civility we've been treated with up till to-day. And you must make allowances for our disturbance of mind. Manners can scarce be looked for from men about to suffer for no fault of their own."

Mr. Walker bowed.

"You'll do us the justice, I'm sure, to believe that it's with the greatest regret we find ourselves forced to copy your commander's methods," said he. "He hath much to answer for, for this day's work, and will dearly rue it, if he's a man of any bowels."

"Sir, he's not," returned the Colonel bitterly.

"A word in your ear, Colonel Talbot, and gentlemen all," said Mr. Walker briskly. "'Tis about that very matter I am come, far more than the other. It's hard to believe he will sacrifice your lives, when by undoing his own ill-considered act—which he must bitterly repent already—he can save them."

"Perfectly hopeless, sir, take my word for it," said my lord, who always tried to carry himself jauntily. "'What can't be cured must be endured,' is a good working proverb; and it's the one for us, to the best of my belief."

"For all that," said Adam, "we can scarce be wrong in thinking you will be glad to join with us in making the attempt."

"I fear," said Colonel Talbot, "that you don't know the temper of the man you have to deal with. We do. He's a savage."

"Well, gentlemen all," said Mr. Walker, "'tis your only chance, and so we warn you. You will, I am sure, absolve us from blame in the matter."

"Why, man," my Lord Netteville broke out, "you're not going to ask us to sign our own death-warrants, are you, or even to approve them?"

"I had no such intention, my Lord Netteville," said Mr. Walker, haughtily, "but to make you a proposal that I thought might avert your doom. I had," said he, after a short pause, "another proposal to make you; we thought you might be anxious to have a priest of your own communion to attend you in your last hours. I'm not wrong there, I see," for there was a little movement among the prisoners. "There's none in the town, as you'll scarce wonder to hear; but if you'll write a letter to your General, the flag that takes our message can take it too, and bring back an answer."

The upshot was that the prisoners writ a letter to Richard Hamilton, who was represented to have powers equal to or higher than Rosen's, and was a man more like to yield to pity. They represented their case very feelingly, as I thought, who both read the letter and signed it, at my Lord Netteville's urgent request, as his deputy, "for a hand so merciful," quoth he, "should, sure, be a lucky one, and bring us a good answer."

Lucky hand or none, here is the answer they had:

"GENTLEMEN,

"In answer to yours, what these poor people are like to suffer they may thank themselves for, being their own fault, which they may prevent by accepting the conditions that have been offered them; and if you suffer in this it cannot be helped, but shall be revenged on many thousands of these people (as well innocent as others) within and without that city.

"Yours,

"R. HAMILTON."

Accordingly, the next day yet more of our poor "protected friends"—save the protections!—were driven up under the walls. But yet the Governors were in no hurry to proceed with the execution of the prisoners (who lay that day in Newgate Prison), as knowing that in them lay the one hope of relief to the others. And they had their reward; for moved either by their condition, should he persist; or by Richard Hamilton's entreaties (which I cannot think he would withhold in such a cause, whatever or however he might write in a letter of his intentions), or as some

say by a letter he had from King James from Dublin, Rosen sent back to their homes the next morning those he had so wickedly and faithlessly torn from them on the Tuesday. That he had such a letter, however, seems scarce within the limit of belief, for how could a courier go and come to Dublin in two days?

We got rid of as many of our own folk, along with them, that were become too sick and exhausted to be of any use in the city. Good had it been for us if we could have sent all away that were so; but not only was that impossible, owing to the watchfulness of the enemy, but we had to take from among the others very near as many as we sent away. By reason of the departure of those who left the city, some that lay helpless were deprived of their natural guardians. One of these came upon my hands; it was the little lad that had his legs carried off by a cannon-ball upon the 18th of May. I had seen him once or twice since his accident, and had admired his constancy in his sufferings, which was that of a man. Now, by Dr. Aicken's request, I took him under my own care entirely, finding a place for him in a house near our own where I could see him as often as I pleased. This poor child was starved almost to a skeleton, and when 'twas asked of him in my hearing how his friends could bear to desert him in such a plight, his answer brought before our minds a lively picture of the straits the poor among us were even now reduced to.

"Ach, doctor dear," said he, for it was Dr. Aicken that put the question to him, "sure, 'tis the stones of the wall that's poor eatin'."

A few more questions brought out the confession that for days together this poor child, like many and many another in the town, had had scarce a bite to eat that was fit for human food. Even I, that went so much into poor places, had had little notion how keen the want was become until I heard this story.

But was it wonderful? Was it not what was to be looked for? In spite of Lundy's protestations, he had taken no care to victual the town, but the very contrary; and he was nearer to the truth in what he had told the English officers (though happily we were not near so bad then as he made us out) than in what he said to Captain Browning in my hearing. But when the population of a town springs up in a few days from seven or eight thousand souls to near thirty thousand, it needs small proof that they must either be able to get at provisions speedily and easily, or come with speed still greater to sore distress. As to the first, it was all

the care of the besiegers to bar us up from them ; that the second was upon us, with all its miseries, every day made more evident.

I well remember an altercation that arose between Mr. Hewson and myself about this very child. 'Twas so usual a thing with him to disapprove of what I did that I cared exceeding little for his opinion, save as it influenced the opinion of others that I valued at a higher rate. It moved me little, therefore, that he took it into his head to pronounce it an unchristian thing in me to bestow so much of my time upon persons that, as he phrased it, were not members of the household of faith ; in which black list he counted both my friends among the prisoners and this maimed child. But when he took it upon himself to remind me that we in my father's house were now put upon rations, for all the world like the garrison, and so to imply that this rule (most reasonable, as I acknowledged it) was broken by such alms as I bestowed upon my cripple and one or two more, 'twas another matter.

"I am not forgetful of it, sir," I told him, a little haughtily, "and I assure you that I do not exceed the allowances of my family, though I be dealing with my own property and none of my father's."

"Your allowances are then too liberal," quoth he, severely ; "and if your duties to your family leave you so much time on your hands——"

"Why, you must see yourself that they do !" I answered, amazed.

"Then I say that you might put it to better use than to spend it upon Papists and others that are far likelier to do you harm than you to do them good. There are those in your own communion that are as much in need both of food and of consolation."

I looked at the man, who was lean by this time to very haggardness ; the explanation both of his leanness and of his rancour flashed across me at once. Not a doubt but, out of his own pittance, he spared every possible morsel to aid some that were in greater need.

"Master Hewson," I said—and I tried to speak with great gentleness—"all they that have fought for their faith are of my communion ; and I wish—oh, I can't tell you how I wish !—that I had power and wealth enough to extend my alms to every soul that's in want of them !"

He looked at me, as I had done a moment before at him, as one that takes the measure of an antagonist.

"Ay, say you so?" said he. "Verily, you know not the measure of your own presumption! Would you take away the cup from the lips it is poured out for? And," quoth he, with a sudden change of tone, "I hear you took some of the water from Columbkille's Well yesterday to wash his wounds with. That can't be true, even of you?"

"It is," I said; "for I did."

"Woman," said he—sure, never man so swelled with indignation—"do you know the price of it? Do you know that it was drawn at the peril of a maiden's life?" This was true; for the sharp-shooters lay in wait every morning for those that went—as all must go or send—to these wells for their supply of drinking-water. "'Tis the same price," said Mr. Hewson, "that was paid for that draught of water that was brought to King David from the well of Bethlehem that was at the gate; a draught that he judged too costly for any use but the sacred one of sacrifice to God."

"Ah, sir," said I, "King David knew not, as we do, what God's own voice should say, when it should be heard in earth's familiar speech, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me.'"

I spoke with the extremest gentleness; for, indeed, I felt no anger against him any more. He regarded me with an uncertain countenance for a moment, and then turned into the house without another word. But whether it was anger or a dawning comprehension that kept him silent, I could not tell.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A WELCOME MESSENGER.

AND now a pestilence began to be rife in the town; and no wonder, reeking as it was with the stench of too hasty and too frequent burial. Even that, perhaps, was scarce so fertile a cause of it as the kind of food that the people were forced, for very famine, to eat; 'twas most revolting to hear of, not to say to make use of. A contribution was set on foot, as had been done before, for the poor of the town. All they that had, gave; but what was private benevolence among so many starving creatures?

And yet no sign of relief. 'Twas longed for; 'twas prayed for, and that continually; but I think—among some, at least, in the town—it was scarce hoped for any more.

Every day the people perished by tens, by dozens, by scores; not only among them that had been smitten with the pestilence, but among the rest as well—men that but for the famine had been well enough. And among them all there was but one wish—a wish so strong that it annulled the pains of death to some of them. Men that died in the cruel pangs of the sickness would half forget them while they besought their survivors to hold out to the last like themselves. Men that fell upon the street from sheer weakness, and died where they fell, would gather the last of their strength together, and spend it upon the city's watch-word, "No surrender!" The cause was become wife and child to such; the one care they carried with them to their graves was lest they should be baulked of the reward they had paid so dear for—to wit, its triumph, and the freedom of their country. And with every such death that care of theirs became a more sacred trust to such as were left to take it up.

Now were Dr. Aicken's hands full indeed ; and now, though I would, perhaps, if left to mine own choice, have desired to stay more in the house, since the streets were become so noisome, I found it impossible to withdraw from my nursing.

My Lord Netterville was left almost entirely in my charge, for his own chirurgeon ceased to come to a place so plague-stricken : and Dr. Aicken could make him but one visit in the two days, and not always that. What my lord had done to his hand, I know not—perhaps it was but the trouble of his mind that acted on his wound ; but from what cause soever, it broke out at this time as bad as at first, and far angrier. I could not be unconcerned to see so much suffering, and to think that more might be in store for him—even the loss of the hand itself. But the case of Colonel Talbot was as much harder than his as pain of mind is than pain of body. Trouble that may have a term and pass is a small thing, however sharp, to trouble that hath neither hope nor remedy. And that this was Colonel Talbot's case became plainer every day. He had been a sick man when he came into Derry ; he was now a dying one—dying on his feet, like the soldier he was ; and 'twas no more than common humanity in Mr. Walker to endeavour his release as he did, though, sure, never man raised himself a finer crop of enemies by any good action.

His lady had offered us five hundred pound for his ransom ; had it lain in my choice, he should have gone free for nothing. 'Twas too hard upon both of them that he should be shut up here, deprived of the care of his wife when most he needed it ; while she was well aware of his state, and yet could do nothing for him. My own case sharpened my sympathy for them, and sometimes I could not check a silly superstition that assailed me—that as it fared with him in Derry, so it fared with Captain Hamilton in Paris ; that if the one should perish, so likewise should the other. I blamed myself much for a thought so rootless and bootless ; but, for all that, it returned again and again.

I think it was in returning from their lodging one day that I found myself accosted, not by a word, but by a smile ; 'twas on the face of an old acquaintance of mine, the last I thought to meet in the streets of Derry—Gorman O'Cahan. That he was a prisoner was evident, for a soldier of ours had him by the arm on each side. Two grown men to one small lad—'twas, sure, an extravagance of caution ! For all he was so guarded, his smile

had the old good-humour and frankness, and the old dimensions as well; it put me into the strangest yearning recollection of freedom, and fresh air, and Cloncall. I stopped him and his guards, and spoke to him.

"Why, Gorman," said I, "are you a prisoner? I scarce thought you would have been among our enemies."

"It's before the Governor I'm going, *anny way*," quoth he. "At my own request, I may tell you. It's to drive me back among the inimy with me wounds in the *rare* they'd have done, the murtherin' blackguards! only that I told them I was a friend of his, and he'd nivver forgive them if they deprived him ov the pleasure ov my company."

'Tis impossible to render the roguish drollery of this child, whose face had all its old faculty of expressing twice as much as he said. He set me laughing in spite of all the reasons I had for gravity.

One of the guards spoke up and told me how the lad had put himself in the way of capture, and how, suspecting him of being a spy, they would have driven him back to the enemy, as he said, but for his request to be taken before the Governors. He could not take it upon himself, the man said, to refuse such a request, made with so much assurance.

"You were right, I'll warrant you," said I to the man. "I know this lad of old, and have had reason to think him a true man."

"Ye hear that, ye mistrustful *thaives*?" said the boy, with a sudden assumption of importance. "Now, perhaps, it's to let me walk without your kind assistance you'll be plazed to do."

In effect, the men ceased to hold him by the shoulders. He looked at them with a comical face of triumph, but remained between them as he was.

"And how's the little jantleman, me lady?" he asked of me.

"Come and see for yourself," said I, "when your interview with the Governors is over."

It was not long till he came, and was delighted to find Roland had not forgotten him, but had for him as much friendship as ever. A fine game of romps he would have treated him to, and, indeed, began it, but the child had neither strength nor spirits to bear his part.

Gorman took him up in his arms.

"What's the matter with the little jantleman?" he asked of me, with an anxious face.

I had not a word to answer.

"There's naething wrong wi' him but the heat," said Annot Wilson sharply.

"That and the stench together, maybe," said the lad; and fell to dandling Roland in his arms, whereat the child began to stroke his face and beseech him to carry him home to Cloncalla.

'Twas the same chord that had been touched in mine own mind, and it took some soothing in mine arms to make him forget its imperious music.

"Where are you going to sleep to-night?" I asked presently of Gorman.

"At home, av your ladyship plaises," said he.

"That's impossible, my lad," I told him. "Don't you know that you won't be permitted to pass out of the gates without the Governors' written pass to show you are no spy?"

"It's that same I have in my pocket," said Gorman, with one of his sidelong, expressive glances towards the children's women, as though to warn me that no more could be said in their presence.

Needless to say that I found another and a more private opportunity to hear all he had to tell me before he quitted the house.

"You'll kape it perfectly sacret, me lady," he began, "for it's a spy I have to pass myself off for when I fall in with anny of the inimy. But ye know I can carry a message, don't ye?"

"Indeed I do," I returned, "and owe you some thanks for the last you brought me, too."

"Nivver spake ov it, lady darlint—nivver spake ov it," said the boy. "Look at me," he went on: "'tis meself that's not much like a messenger from a great Ginerall to a brace of Governors, is it now?"

"You certainly are not," I said, unable to forbear laughing, less at the lad's words than at the look wherewith he pointed them, which at every moment expressed a deeper cunning and more enjoyment of the same.

"Well now," said he, "that's the very raison I've been able to bring the message. I'd nivver have got here at all, at all, if it had been a dacent, respectable creature I looked, for there's a thief ov a sintry at ivvery hedge for a mile round the town, and 'tis a dozen times, at laste, they stopped me and questioned me. Sure, av I hadn't been able to change words wid them in the Irish, it's nivver at all I'd have got past thim, and that's the truth. But,

betwixt that and the looks of me, it never entered their heads that I'd been let into Derry, let alone to the officers' council."

"Truly, Gorman," said I, "I can scarce believe it myself."

"It's meself," said Gorman, grinning, "that's much of the same mind. 'Tis the truth, for all that," he continued, "and not a word of a lie. It's Gorman O'Cahan, and nobody else, that has brought General Kirke's letter to thim gintlemen at the council-hall."

"A letter!" said I, astonished.

"A letter, no less," returned the boy, twinkling with whimsical pride in his achievement.

"But how in the world——" I exclaimed.

"No difficulty in life, me lady," said he, clapping his hand on his leg. "I folded it into me garter an' tied it round me leg. Sure, whin the leg got into the town, the letter wasn't left behind, an' the answer I'm to carry back is sewed into the belt of me breeches."

"Why," said I, "you have done well and bravely, Gorman, and have brought to a good end an errand that many a grown man has failed in. Were I the General, you should name your own reward when you deliver the answer into his hands."

"Sure enough," said he, "that's what wan of the Governors—him that has a love for the sound ov his own voice—said whin they gave it to me. But, indade, I'd nivver have had the assurance to name the reward the General has promised me already, and that's a commission in the army, for all so simple as I stand here."

"Truly," said I, "I can't see how he can offer you less."

It may be some offset to Kirke's many misdeeds that he kept his word in this matter; and, sure, if ever peasant earned his gentility, it was this child, by bringing to the town, at the very nick of time, the encouragement they needed.

For the famine grew sorer and sorer. The rations to the garrison were gone down to a little meal, with tallow and spice—they made it into a kind of pancakes, and I believe it was of benefit to their health. But they received of it but barely enough to keep the life in them; so that now the men began to die by scores every day. What Hamilton's soldiery had never been able to do—namely, to exact an equivalent in our men's lives for those we slew of them—those terrible allies of his now set about doing, and did thoroughly: Colonel Talbot himself told me that a man

of their guard fell down under his arms and died in the doorway of their lodgings ; whereupon he began to remonstrate with the rest, desiring to know why they chose to endure such hardships rather than to return to their allegiance to their natural Prince. Whereupon the sergeant bade him hold his peace ; " Lest," quoth he, " I be not able to restrain my men, and you, though a prisoner and privileged person, come by some hurt which I can't prevent."

And yet the case of this gentleman was much more pitiable than that of those he was so concerned for ; since, if their lives were sacrificed, 'twas for a cause whereof the worthiness was known and confessed, and could not be gainsaid ; while his was thrown away for the sake of one whereat he scoffed.

One thing that very greatly sustained the hearts of some of us at this time was the appearance of a lovely star, so marvellous brilliant that it was visible in the daylight ; which, sure, was an unheard-of thing, and not far short of miraculous. I think I felt more encouraged and strengthened by the sight of it before I learnt that the enemy saw it as well as we, and regarded it, as we did, as a heavenly signal of speedy victory.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A RIOT, AND A GREAT MISFORTUNE.

AND now I come to recall the memory of a day so blue and clear above as to make it a thing scarce credible that foulness or any kind of strife should exist under such a sky—so noisome and painful upon earth that it was as hard to believe that the sun still shone in heaven. 'Twas yet early, and the air so still that every little sound was clear to the ear, like pebbles to the eye in pure water. All of a sudden we were aware of a muffled kind of rioting not far off; and presently there burst into Butchers' Street, in a disorderly fashion, a multitude of people of all sorts. Faith, there was but one sort of face among them, for all that, and it was a face of anger and suspicion; but one kind of voice, and that was hoarse with rage and weak with fasting; ay, and but one kind of figure, and that was the leanest men can be brought down to not to die of it. Miserable starved wretches they were, ghastly to look upon; and what they fain would have made shouts of anger so died away in their throats that they were as pitiful to hear as an infant's wail of pain. They crowded about Mr. Walker's house, which was but two doors off from ours, with every expression of discontent and mistrust. It made me sorry to see some of the soldiers among the mob. The Governor had deserved better at the hands of these men than suspicion and insult.

Mr. Walker was not in his house; but for all that they would not be denied entrance, and for the best part of an hour as many of them as could get within the doors of it searched it from garrets to cellars. Not a thing did they find to justify their suspicions or reward their search; a few bottles of mum and cider (which Mr.

Walker was entitled to for his own use) they found and took to the common storehouse. But as to that abundance of provision of all sorts which some of his enemies had told them they should find in his possession, they found none of it, but had their trouble for their pains. When they were satisfied they had been misled, they began to disperse, ashamed, no doubt, of having harboured thoughts so unworthy of a man that had from the first been among their staunchest friends.

Margery was most desirous that I would delay my going out until they were all gone out of the street; and so I did, as we both supposed. For I was impatient to be gone, and have finished, and be back again, free to spend the rest of my time with mine own son, who needed me now as much as any one else. I could not shut mine eyes to the fact that he was wasting day by day; and could I have found any one to relieve me of the duties I had undertaken, I had never, I think, stirred from his side. I could find none that would or could; but I warrant no woman that is a mother will need to be told that I loitered not about my work, and hated to be delayed either when going out or when returning.

The first moment, therefore, that Margery judged it safe, we left the house, she carrying in her hand a little basket that had in it the very frugal breakfast intended for my little cripple. Simple as it was, and scanty (being but a bowl of porridge), it was wholesome; had he been fed on the offal that his neighbours were by that time glad to eat, he had been dead weeks ago. 'Twas an hour past the time, we knew he would be in pain what was become of it; and from that reason, I suppose, joined to our own impatience, we reconnoitred not the street as we should have done before venturing into it. Thus we overlooked a score or more of ragged, haggard creatures, both men and women, that had sat them down for very weariness about Mr. Walker's door.

A kind of stifled shout rose from them as we appeared in the doorway, so that for a moment I think we were both minded to turn back into the house. Then we thought it unwise to show mistrust. I suppose that Margery shared my feeling, or assuredly she had not hesitated to pluck me back by the arm; and we stepped out into the street instead, with all the appearance of confidence we could muster up.

As Margery closed the door behind me, an old woman rose from the side of our own door-post, and laid her hand upon my arm

with a gesture that was almost a threat. I knew her for a wretched creature that lived in a garret of the very house we were going to ; many a time she had watched us coming and going to tend the wounded lad, and many an alms she had had of me, both in money and in food ; and once or twice I had wondered that, when so many persons like herself had left the town from time to time, she had remained to share our miseries. Perhaps it was that she had nowhere to go outside the walls ; perhaps some hope of booty withheld her, if we should be worsted in the long-run. Whatever the cause, here by ill-luck she was ; and, what was worse, she knew me and guessed my errand.

"Stop, Mrs. Hamilton," quoth she to me—"stop, my beautiful Rose of Derry. Troth, the rose is something wilted and faded by the late heats"—and thereat she laughed in a fashion that made me shrink from the touch of her hand—"but not so much," she continued, "as if, like some of her fellows, she had borne the burden of the day ; she hath had her shelter, while they have been out in the glare of the sun. Here be some of them," said she—and with that she beckoned the people that had been at Mr. Walker's door when we came out, and now were gathered about Margery and me—"they've got neither bite nor sup out of the Governor's house—the divlle fly away with him for an old cheat !—but maybe there's something in Mistress Margery's basket that's better than nothing at all."

We were quite surrounded before she had done speaking, and no retreat possible. Words of rebuke came not readily to my lips, for if ever human beings stood in deadly need, these did. Before I found them, the basket was snatched from Margery's hand, and that restored both my breath and my voice.

"Give it back !" I said to those near me. "There's food in it, truly, but so little !—scarce enough for one of you, and of no use at all among so many. Give it back ! 'Tis for the poor lad that lost his legs in Pump Street. You can't rob a child, I'm sure, and a wounded child, too, that took his hurt in this very quarrel. She shall go into the house, and bring you out whatever we have that is ready to eat."

The man that had it—the leanest creature, I think, of the whole lean crew—would have given it back at my words, and held it forth towards Margery. But a dozen hands clutched at it, and tore it from him. There was food in it, and they were scarce more than embodied hunger. They could not bear to part with it, even

upon the promise of more. I saw the wolf rising in their eyes, I saw some more of the same starved brotherhood coming back into the street from the Diamond, and I was afraid of them.

"Let us go back into the house," I said, "and I promise you—I promise you, I say—to bring you out something to eat—something for every one of you—if you will but wait quietly where you are."

They released me. Margery was opening the door with shaking hands, for, indeed, the people were scarce human any more, and knew not themselves what they were ready to do. And I believe they had waited quietly enough, had it not been for the wretched woman that had set them on at first.

"Are you such sheep?" she screamed. "Will you be content with her dole, when you might go in and help yourselves? Why should she have abundance, when we have nothing at all?"

Abundance! I thought. If she could but have known how spare our diet had become!

"Abundance—yes, abundance!" she shrieked, as if in answer to my thought. "So much that it's my Lady Bountiful she can afford to play, while we haven't a bite to put betwixt our teeth, and don't know where to lay our hands on one, unless we search her cellars. And why shouldn't we do that same? Is it fighting men they are, that must be nourished though the rest of us starve? Divvle a hair of them! but useless mouths, the same as ourselves. If it's mouths we are, all the same together, then my word is share and share alike."

I was not ignorant of the value of firmness and a manner of authority among such people, and I did my best to exercise them. But Margery and I were not alone in the doorway; more than one of the rioters had forced their way to it as well as we, so that we could neither go in ourselves nor shut them out but with their leave.

"Stand back, friends, if it please you," said I, and I think I said it with no appearance of fear. "If you will be patient for a minute or two, and keep order, you shall have what I promised you. If not, I will not give you a crumb."

"Maybe we will not ask you," shrieked the woman that had constituted herself our special enemy—Heaven knows for what reason, for I had never harmed her, nor even addressed her, save to befriend her. At her words the man that stood next to me caught me by the arm. In spite of myself I was daunted, and began to plead with them.

"There's not a man in Derry can be ignorant," I said, "of what we have done—my family and I—and how largely contributed to the public service. No family in the city has given more—none so much, I believe, whatever she may say of us. Will you harm your friends? No; the men of Derry are made of other stuff. As for our abundance that is left—look here!" and I thrust out my hands to them; I pushed back my sleeves, to show them mine arms, where the bones stood out as gaunt as their own. "That woman," said I—and I pointed to her—"hath more flesh on her bones than I."

"Perhaps," said a man that stood in front of me. "But you have food to spare, that you give away."

"Ay, and hath since ever the dearth began," said mine enemy maliciously. "I have reason to know that same."

"You have; and to be thankful for it, too!" said Margery angrily. "Look at my mistress," said she, in a voice that would be heard. "I'll tell you—what she never will—where that food comes from that she gives away. Though we be not fighting men, we are on rations the same as they, and it was some of my mistress's own allowance she was taking to that poor lad, who now will get none."

She would have said more; but the door was drawn a little further open, and a basket put into her hand by one of my father's women, who, I think, had heard the altercation, and had gathered together all the food she could find, that we might distribute it among the mob, and so pacify them.

Alas! she knew not the wolfishness of hunger. Before Margery could so much as open the basket, it was snatched from her hands like the other, and emptied in a moment. Then began a scuffling and snatching among the poor wretches themselves, who, one had thought, had scarce had strength for it; so that the food, which, had it been shared, had afforded some relief to every one of them, was seized by the strongest, struggled for by the others, and wasted in the struggle. Some ran off with what they had laid hold of; some fell to cursing because they could get none. 'Twas gone before we could secure the door, which was thrust open in our faces by some of the people, whom the sight and then the loss of the food had driven perfectly frantic.

One man in particular was most violent; 'twas he that had been about to give back Margery's basket when it was torn from his hands. By this time he was driven clean beyond his own control.

He held me by the arm, and in his frenzy he knew not how he bruised me ; nor I myself, neither, till later.

"Oh, 'tis wicked ! 'tis shameful !" said he ; and his voice came hoarse and sobbing from his lips. "You can't despise me, my lady, more than I despise myself. You've done much for us, and there's none of us but knows it. 'Tisn't the like of you, that denies yourself to feed them that has no claim on you, that we should rob ! But you—you've always had one meal of meat in the day, at least. It was yesterday at noon that I had my last bite, and that was but the third part of a cat as starved as myself. May God strike me dead where I stand if I've touched food since ! Flesh and blood," quoth he, "can hold on no longer. Have you no help for me, for the love of Heaven !"

Another man held out his hands to me with a sob, much as I had held out mine own a few minutes before.

"Look at you, lady, you said," quoth he. "I say, look at me—look at these hands ! Is it human they are, or bird's claws ?"

"Oh, my lady," cried another, "it's my children at home that are dying of hunger ! Haven't you a bite to spare for them ?"

"Margery, Margery," I whispered to her (part in fear, for, indeed, the men were desperate, but more, I thank God, in pity), "go into the cellar and fetch me out as much meal—of mine own, mind—as will be some relief to every one of them."

She turned quickly into the house to do my bidding, but not so fast but that she heard the wretched creature who had caused all this violence say another wicked thing.

"You'll repent your folly to-morrow," said she to those about her, "if you don't help yourselves now when you have the chance."

Margery turned back to my side ; she faced them without a trace of fear or anger.

"I'll go," said she, in a clear voice, "the moment you stand back out of the house orderly, like yourselves. And I hope you'll take what I bring you like men, and not tear it away like wild beasts and waste it."

Her words had so good an effect upon the men next to us, who were mostly decent folk gone wild with extremity of famine, that they began to stand back out of the house as she bade them. But, God help us ! there were others in the crowd of a lower sort, on whom the words of the wretched woman had more power than hers, and these were driven quite frantic by this appearance of yielding. Some of the gauntest, most famished, and most ruffianly burst

through the rank of those that were drawing back from the door ; one of the most frightful of them all thrust himself close in front of me with a curse.

"Have you meal in your cellar?" said he, and his voice was in itself a threat. "Have you meal? Answer me!"

"Deny it," whispered Margery in mine ear. And "Deny it" whispered mine own fears, for who could say where the spoiling might cease if once these rioters came within the house?

But how could I? And even if I could have framed my lips to a lie, where had been the use, since we had as good as confessed possession already in promising them help? Whether 'twas her whisper or my hesitation, I know not, but the man blazed out into a fury, and would not be denied his answer.

"The truth," said he—"the truth, as you shall answer to God for it."

And, as I am a gentlewoman, he shook me by the shoulder as one might shake a wayward child.

I drew myself away from him with a heat of indignation as great as his.

"Yes, we have," said I; "but I will not show you where to find it, nor will she."

He turned towards the rest with a kind of brutal laugh.

"Come along, mates," said he. "I reckon there are others that will."

For behind us he saw the terrified faces of my father's maid-servants, and the next moment he and his company were thronging past us into the house. Alas! they knew but too well where they should find the cellars, and that in the cellars they should find the food.

The man that first had spoken to me stood between us and the rest, warding off many a thrust that might have hurt us. He did not offer to follow the others, but neither would he permit me to do so.

"'Tis useless, madam," said he, "you could do nothing to restrain them. You would but come by some injury."

"Oh, Margery," I said, "if it were but possible to satisfy them with what I have of my own, that so they might leave my father's untouched!"

"I doubt not but it might have been," said she bitterly, "had you said no, as I asked you. Mrs. Murray and Annot ran down the passage together. I make no doubt but they

went to get as much as would have satisfied them. Now it's too late."

Her words hurt me as though I had been struck in the face. I could not help but shrink, and she saw it. The man that stood beside us both heard what she said and saw my wincing; he looked so remorseful that I was grieved for him afresh. Somehow I could not bear that he should be disappointed the third time of the food he so sorely needed.

I desired he would let me go, and he did. I went into the kitchen, where I found no one but a frightened maid in tears. But as Margery had supposed, there stood a great bucket of meal upon the table.

"Hide that," said I to the maid; and she sprang to her feet to do it.

But before she took it away, I took from it as much as filled a little porringer, which I carried out and gave to the man I pitied. Now that I look back upon it, I see it was a thing that I had no right to do, considering the loss I had brought upon my father. But at the moment I did not once remember that, or cast a thought to it.

"Take this," I said to him; "'tis the last, no doubt, I shall ever have to bestow. And get yourself gone into safety, lest they deprive you even of that when you return."

The man sprang to his feet (for he had sat down upon the doorsill) with a kind of terror in his face.

"What have I done?" said he. "God forgive me! what have I done? But," quoth he, with a quick and resolved gesture, "it's not too late to repair it perhaps even now." And so was gone as quick as his weakness would permit.

I turned to go to mine own chamber, but could get no further than to the dining-room, because of a weak and dizzy feeling that took me at the heart. And the rioters were coming back, having ransacked our cellars; I heard both their voices and their steps. Scarce knowing what I did, I closed the door of the room to avoid seeing them despoil us of our little store. A little store indeed it was shrunk to, chiefly by reason of successive gifts towards the subsistence of these very people. Now it was gone altogether, and what were we to do?

How long I stood alone in the room I never could tell, being quite wrapt up in fighting with mine own weakness. I could hear nothing, for the singing in mine ears; see nothing, for the

dazzling of mine eyes ; remember nothing, and feel nothing, for the throbbing of my heart. I was but making my way slowly to some kind of clearness, when the door opened sharply, and my father entered, with Mr. Hewson just behind him.

"What's this?" said he. "Mary, can you tell me what it means?" I followed his pointing with mine eyes, and beheld through the window the crowd without parting the spoil of our house among them. "What does it mean?" repeated my father, trying in vain to speak calmly.

For all I could do, I could not call a word to my lips to answer him withal; I could but babble like a yearling child. Had it been but mine own property that had been taken, I protest I scarce had cared at that moment; but to ruin all the rest was too bitter.

I would fain have thrown myself upon my knees, but was let by a fear lest it might be taken for a coward begging of pardon, when to be forgiven was the last of my thoughts. Had reparation been in my power by means of any sacrifice, I would have grasped at that; it had been a very medicine to me.

But my father, unable to comprehend my silence, was angered at it.

"Why, girl," said he sharply, "you are no baby to be frightened out of your wits! Put a force upon yourself, and tell me what you know."

The power came with the command, and I began, in broken fashion, to tell him what had passed. Half dazed as I was, I could yet mark his indignation rising higher and higher, and Mr. Hewson at his back listening with inscrutable countenance to every word. It made me the more unsparing to myself. 'Tis true that I had meant no harm; but, alas! it was true no less that through me this irreparable loss and damage had come upon them.

My father hath been a passionate man in his youth; and his indignation, rising higher with every word I spoke, carried away the acquired composure and restraint of his speech.

"God's curse, woman!" said he; "you can't mean the thing you say? I quarrel not with your right to dispose of your own as you thought fit; but mine—you were never, sure, so criminal as to give up mine as well?"

I looked at him as steadily as I could for the blankness that would come between mine eyes and the thing I tried to fix them on.

"There was no way to keep them separate," said I. "I cannot make you understand."

"No way to keep them separate!" said he. "Then, why didn't you refuse them help till you could grant it without ruining the rest of us? Do you know what you have done? We must beg in the streets now, like them that have spoiled us."

Mr. Hewson came between us with a question on his lips. My father cast himself down upon a chair, and took his bent head between his hands; his sorrow was worse to bear than his anger. The whole world seemed as 'twere turning to mist about me, into which I was sinking, and must sink for ever—no shore, no straw to catch at; the one solid thing in the world of vapour was my knowledge that I had done an injury not to be estimated to those I loved best in the world.

Mr. Hewson's harsh voice recalled me from it.

"Let us understand, madam," said he, in his most judicial manner. "Did you give up the stores to the rioters?"

"No, no," I said. "I would sooner——"

And there I stopped, not choosing to say, what was the truth, that I would first have taken my death at their hands.

"What happened then?" said he. "Speak to be understood!"

His stern voice helped me far more than mine own will. I gathered all my strength together with a strong effort.

"He asked me—the ringleader," I said—"if we had any meal. He would not be denied an answer. Had I been able to escape from them into the house, I would have brought out mine own, and given it to them. I meant it—I promised it," I said, willing that he should know the truth. "But when I confessed we had it, they would not wait a moment—they broke into the house, and sought it out; they were not to be withstood in their frenzy. Could I lie?" I ended, driven to excuse me at the last.

"Mr. Hewson, could I lie?"

"'Tis to your credit that you did not," said he, almost gently; "you were nowise to blame. Sir," he repeated, turning to my father, "your daughter hath been in no way to blame."

Mr. Murray slowly lifted up his head.

"No," said he, "she was not to blame; she could not help herself. I have wronged you, Mary," said he, "and I ask your pardon."

I would fain have gone to him, but my feet were heavy as lead,

and I could not stir them ; I know I tried to stretch out mine arms to him, but whether they obeyed my will I cannot tell. Mr. Hewson's comprehension (from whom I looked for nothing but more blame) broke me utterly down. That vapoury universe seemed to rise up all about me, and cut me off from the land of the living. I neither saw nor heard them any more, nor could thank Mr. Hewson for his championship, nor could answer my father's words. I heard a noise in the street without ; then that, too, was swallowed up in perfect blankness

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DARKNESS AND DAWN.

I CAME to myself to a sound of muffled weeping, whereat I faintly wondered ; and to a feeling of the most leaden weariness, so that it seemed a scarce tolerable labour merely to lie still. Margery was moving about me—'twas her grieving that I heard ; she was blaming herself in the cruellest manner for the unmannerly words she had used to me. I tried to comfort her, scarce remembering or caring what it was she had said ; but neither words nor thoughts would come to my call, so that I was fain to desist before I had well begun.

"The poor lad ?" I roused me to ask.

"I'll see to him, madam, if you will but lie still and rest," she answered. "He shall have his portion to-day, at any rate."

"But how ?" said I. "Have we anything left ?"

"Oh yes," said Margery. "One of these poor creatures, smitten with remorse, ran and fetched the guard ; they came up just as the rioters were busy parting their booty in front of the house. Some of it was already carried away ; but they saved some for us, and now the poor starving wretches will reap the reward of their madness. I could find it in my heart to be sorry for them."

So, I thought drowsily, could I ; but I could not muster up the vigour to make sure. To bestir myself, either in mind or body, was beyond my strength ; so letting Margery have her will with me, I turned my face from the light and closed mine eyes.

"Bring Roland," I said to her, "when 'tis his bedtime, and lay him to sleep in mine arms ;" and upon her promise—ere she had finished making it, I think—I fell into the deepest and most dreamless sleep that ever I knew.

When I woke, it was dark night, and silent; my son was in mine arms, and I could hear his breathing. My brain was as clear as a chart, and, faith, the darkness round about me was quickly bright enough with its pictures, drawn in colours of fire against the gloom. Over and over again came before me the whole spectacle of that day; no sooner was it finished than it began again. I would fain have turned my thoughts to something else less sorrowful; but they were like a prisoner bound upon the wheel, that could not get away from the one ghastly circle. Round and round it went, in my own despite; the details that slipped out of view at one turning starting into stronger clearness the next. The man that had tasted no food for four-and-twenty hours, 'twas he that was the chief figure at one review of it; the next, 'twould be he that had a starving child at home, and not a crumb to give it; after that, again, 'twould be the gaunt, leaden-hued faces and skeleton figures of the crowd, which were but examples of what men were coming to everywhere throughout the city. How deep the want had grown! how uncomplaining, for the most part, it was borne! Nay, the more I pondered it, the less could I blame those that had spoiled us. In their hard case, might not I myself have broken away from mine own control? Doubtless it was righteous that they should suffer for it, else rioting might break out everywhere. But also, thought I, let him that knows nothing of the pinch of their misery condemn them; not I.

Had there been none dependent upon my store but myself, how gladly could I have shared it with these my brethren, and then, if relief came not, have died beside them! But at that I took my child's thin hand in mine, and felt that him I could not sacrifice.

And yet there were other mothers in Derry than I. With some of these it was come to this pass, that their children were dying of want before their eyes. What help for them, if succour were delayed much longer? What help for any of us, indeed?—a few days longer or shorter, what did it amount to? If we were doomed in the end, why should we prolong the struggle? Nay, if we were verily doomed, to what purpose was the pain borne already? Lost and wasted, like so many lives; cast into a gulf without a bottom, wherein nothing could be effected though we should toss as many more after them.

And God—the God in whom we had relied, for whose service, as we supposed it, we had ventured both ourselves and our friends

—what was His part in this quarrel? cared He nothing for all we had suffered and were suffering? cared He nothing, or less than nothing, for us, that suffered so much? 'Twas the suggestion of a fiend. For I could not say yea or nay to it, but lay the passive witness of the same phantom dance of remembrance and questioning that had beset me on my awakening. A blackness as of the blackest cloud enwrapt me. I feared as I entered into that cloud, and with reason. For therein I was parted from all I had ever held for Divine; every landmark seemed to be rooted up; everything that had formerly seemed true and certain now seemed matter of doubt. Clear light to walk by seemed an unattainable blessing; if, indeed, it were not rather a foolish dream that could never be realised. What we had taken for it was but the misleading flashing of aimless lightning, I thought at that moment; shifting brilliancy that might destroy us, but could never guide.

Sunstreaks of happier thought, rays of light from the knowledge of the righteousness of our cause, might play upon the fringes of the storm; but they could not pierce its darkness. In that was I wrapt up past enlightening; tost to and fro past calming; tortured by the revelation of our warfare's cost in human misery—ay, and in human integrity as well;—witness the conduct of these rioters, that had been upright people once, till hunger transformed them into wild beasts. Was it justifiable? Nay, was it even worth our while? If our God were verily one that cared so little for our suffering—if the righteous and the wicked were equal in His eyes and alike in His regard—if 'twas indeed all one to Him whether we toiled with bleeding feet in the way He seemed to have set open before us, counting no cost; or passed it by unheeding at the word of human command; was His service any sufficient reward for all our toil? Surely, no! Was, then, religion after all no better than a trackless maze?—and the hope of a clue to guide us no more than a frantic dream?

I laid my hands upon my child, sleeping by my side, as though to stay myself upon my love for him. Alas! here was no abiding rock, but shifting sand like all the rest; for if all else were as dark and doubtful as I saw it, what right had I to cast away his life as I was doing? Mine own might be little worth, either to save or to cast away. But his!—his was my single treasure. Could I sacrifice that for a cause which, after all, might be a folly and a delusion?

The daylight began to creep cold into the room, and then!

could be still no longer. I rose and drew back the window-curtain. The stars had all paled, save one that was exceeding glorious, the same that was visible in broad daylight, and that was thought by many to be an augury of our final victory. I could see but a strip of sky from my window, but in that strip there was a small bright cloud, rose-tinted by the dawn; it was changing from rose to gold while I looked at it. Its beauty—so far away and high—smote me with a kind of pain; that its Maker and our Father should take thought to set so fair an ensign in the sky, all blazoned with light and lovely colour, but take no thought for us that fought beneath it, and were come nigh to perishing.

Standing fatigued me, for I was still weak from my swoon, and I sank upon my knees beside the window. In the action I threw down with mine elbow a little book that lay upon the sill. I picked it up, and found it was my Bible. At the sight of it a thought came into my head that was foolish even to wickedness. Long ago, when Wamphray and I were girl and boy, we had been wont to find ourselves omens and directions by means of the *sortes Virgilianæ*. Why should I not, I thought, open this book at random and see what message, for comfort or correction, should reach me from its pages? None could better know than I how futile was such a method of inquiry, yet I could not resist making the trial.

But who can set bounds to the power of Him who commanded the light to shine out of darkness? It pleased Him now to make the folly of a foolish woman all as potent for her illumination as any wisdom; for the verse I lit upon was much the same to me as if an almighty voice had said, "Let there be light."

"*For what is your life?*" I read. "*It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.*" And above me in the sky the little cloud swam golden in the field of blue.

'Twas a vapour, too, and more transitory still than human life; yet even so slight a thing hath its appointed task. Could Omnipotence by means of that task transmute the floating mist from that which merely shone by light reflected, into that which burnt with its own fire and shone with its own glory like the star beside it, were it not worth the most searching stress of tempest? If Omnipotence, out of us shadows, would fashion that which hath life in itself, and takes hold upon eternity by virtue of kindred thereto, should we murmur at His methods? Or should we

shrink, even if these should pierce to the dividing of soul from spirit, and of joint from marrow?

It was "Peace, be still!" to my heart, for I saw in that moment how it is the power to lose our life for the sake of that which we worship that doth save it, that doth transmute the shadow into substance. Whether for the right to receive truth open-minded, like ourselves; or in loyal defence of a great office, like the enemy; what did it matter, so it were verily the prime truth of the world to each soul, for which it stood ready to endure to the uttermost?

"O, sanctâ simplicitas!" I said to myself, with a better comprehension than ever before—"O, sanctâ simplicitas!" To us the martyrdom by fire, if God so willed it; to them, our enemies and our brethren, the peasant's sacrifice of the necessities of life to compass our death. So it were to each the one prime duty his light showed him, was it not in the power of God to turn it to salvation in this case as in that, in that case as in this?

A peace so buoyant took hold upon me that hunger and weakness were chased clean out of my remembrance. 'Twas not enough to have the weight lifted from my heart that had pressed me down to the earth; 'twas not enough to be assured of the presence of the Master in the storm. Like Peter in his desire to be bid to go to the Lord upon the water, so a passionate wish took hold upon me to make myself of use in this contest. If the word of command to my soul were "Peace, be still!" that to my mind was "Peace, be up and doing!"

In the early clearness and hush of the morning a plan started complete into my mind that seemed, could I but carry it out, to offer some small chance of help. 'Twas born the one moment and full-grown the next, so that I think I would have acted on it the minute after that had I had the necessary things beside me. But presently there came to mine ears the noise of voices and footsteps in the streets, the steps and voices of them that were on their way to fetch the daily supply of water from Columbkille's Well; it was become a service of more danger than ever now that the Irish lines were drawn so near. One joined them from our house, opening and shutting the door with all the caution and quietness imaginable. Looking out of my window, I saw it was a little maid dressed in a countrywoman's suit. The dress fitted my scheme to a marvel; 'twas the very thing I needed.

"She shall lend it to me," I determined. But the time for putting it in practice was over for that morning.

It was strange and sweet to see Margery's face of surprise when she came creeping softly into my room (on purpose to avoid disturbing me should I be still asleep) and found Roland and me at one of our little old games. She had, sure, been tenfold more astonished had she known the tempest that had wrought its will on me in the hours of darkness. But as, when the shadows flee away at the daybreaking, the birds awake and sing, so it was with me; and the baby-prattle and laughter of my child were not too trivial to be speech for my thankfulness.

CHAPTER XL.

RELATES THE BEGINNING OF A DANGEROUS EXPEDITION.

IT was necessary for me to take some one into my confidence. I asked myself whom it should be, Rosa or Margery? After some thought, I chose Margery, partly to assure her of my forgiveness, and partly because I desired to spare my sister as much anxiety as I could. Now that mine eyes began to be opened, I saw how wasted and how weak she was, and small as the benefit might be to keep from her on one day that which must inevitably come to her knowledge on the next, I judged it worth the bestowing.

I knew beforehand that I should have a thousand objections to parry, some of which, to tell the truth, I scarce saw how to answer with any hope of convincing my listener. But some unwonted power of persuasion or of authority must have dwelt upon me that day, for I succeeded beyond my utmost expectations in winning her to promise, first of all, not to oppose nor betray my scheme; and afterwards, to assist me by all means in her power.

'Twas a very tower of strength to me to have a scheme planned out that promised the smallest possibility of help, and, truly, I had need that day of everything that could put me in heart, or give me any confidence. For the state of our store-room was enough to give any one a foretaste of despair. Margery did well to avoid details when she desired to comfort me. 'Twas true that something was saved from the spoilers, but it was so little that the face of starvation seemed scarce averted thereby for any measurable time. With great frugality, what we still possessed might last us a week; at the end of that time, if relief were still delayed, we must starve with our neighbours. Yester-

day so blank a prospect had overwhelmed me with despair; but to-day I had a secret hope that bore me up.

There was many a thing to think of, many a preparation to make; and the day passed even far too quickly. And never, methought, were the faces of my dear ones half so dear as when I bade them good-night, not knowing if I should ever look upon them again. My pillow seemed to mock me when I saw it. To what purpose should I lay my head on it, when sleep was as little likely to visit me there as the goddess with her horn of plenty? But that no ascetic folly might deprive me of the smallest fraction of my vigour (which I knew must be taxed to its utmost limit), I did dutifully make the attempt, and was rewarded by some hours of the most refreshing slumber. But I was broad awake when, in the gray dusk that as yet could scarce be told for dawn, Margery brought me the dress I had determined to wear. How much I could have delighted, I thought to myself as she was dressing me in it, in disguising myself thus a few short weeks before! Even then I thought with some amusement of Rosa's face, if by any chance she should see me, and of Roland's, if he should wake when I was stooping over his cot to leave my farewell kiss upon his brow. He did not. I could not choose but wonder; for truly I thought I left a little piece of my heart with him as well. It was to tear myself away, indeed, that I had to do. A kind of blindness fell upon me as I rejoined Margery at the staircase foot.

"Remember," I said to her, "if I return no more, 'tis in your charge I leave him."

"Ah, madam," said she, "think better of it whilst there's time, and give up the adventure."

"That were to show great love for him, truly," said I. "Ask rather what is like to become of him, and of all of us, if I fail in it!"

"Why, Kirke is close to us," said she. "Any day may see him attempt the relief of the place."

"Speak no more of it," said I. "'Tis a week and a day since his messenger came to us, and not a finger hath he stirred to help us, for all his promises. He is surely ignorant of the straits we are come to. Well, 'tis time that some one took him an account of them."

We opened the door as quietly as Cicely had done on the previous morning; then, each with a water-pail in her hand, we left

the house and made the best of our way towards the gate at the end of the street.

Scarce a creature of the water-carriers was there before us, but plenty of them were on their way, and in a few minutes there was a considerable party collected at the gate. Then the sally-port was set open for us; we passed out one by one, and presently came to Columbkille's Well, where I drew my bucketful like the rest; but my pail, when I had filled it, I gave to Margery with her own.

The others left the well as soon as they were served. 'Twas a wonder, in fact, that the noise of the windlass brought not a random shot or two (for 'twas still too dark to distinguish figures at a few paces' distance) to quicken their movements. But I lingered, with a pressure of the hand and a whispered word to Margery, and in a moment more was left alone.

There was a faint sound of stealthy footsteps, and voices that scarce dared even to whisper; I knew it meant another party upon the same errand as that of those I had come with; but I waited not their approach. I quitted the well like the rest, but in the contrary direction. At our rampart I was stopped, as I had foreseen and provided for; and upon the production of a pass I had procured from Adam Murray (and which I left in the hands of the sentry that questioned me) I was permitted to go on, with God speed, upon mine errand, whatever that might be. Once past our own lines, I took my way in the direction of the windmill, and up the hill.

Now that I review it in peace and quietness, I can see that my plan was in the nature of a forlorn hope—a suggestion of something not far removed from despair. But at the time I had an inner assurance of success—sure, I know not why, when so many fitter than I for the task had tried it and failed—that made it seem feasible if not simple. The others had made the attempt to pass through the enemy's lines at the riverside, which was their weakest point, and consequently was vigilantly guarded. I meant to endeavour to make my way as far within their lines as I could, at the very busiest and central point, where such an attempt seemed so little likely and so purposeless that they might possibly be more negligent. And favoured by the morning dusk and the hedges and ditches, that served the enemy so well as covert to their marksmen and ambuscaders, I thought I might perhaps contrive to go a considerable distance unnoticed. After that, and

when the light grew broader, I meant to lie hid until I should spy some officer or other person of distinction, whose protection I might claim; pretending to be a little countrywoman, that had strayed from the road on her way from the Culmore side to visit a sick parent at Carrigans. I thought I could so mimic the country speech and behaviour, and the trepidation of such a person in such a plight, and in the presence of her betters, as to pass myself off for the peasant I gave myself out for. Then I meant to beg for a pass to Carrigans and back to Culmore, and I made little doubt but I should receive it; for since the driving of the Protestants to the walls they were anxious to conciliate them, and to that end were now lavish of small favours—so at least we had heard in Derry. What I was mainly desirous to do was to produce such an impression of simplicity and timorousness as should proclaim me unfit to be either messenger or spy, lest the pass I meant to ask should be burdened with a condition—to attempt no communication with the ships. Strange, that I should try to deceive them, on purpose to escape the necessity of lying, and that after telling a dozen lies! I intended to profess myself a country peasant, which I was not, on my way to visit a sick parent, of whom I had none. Sure, herein I was as deeply dipped in deceit as I well could be; and yet, had I given my promise, I should have held myself bound thereby.

It was still very dark as I left our rampart; not to lose the advantage of the darkness, I walked very swiftly up to near the top of the hill. Here it was lighter than below, and I was beginning to be in pain lest I should be spied (for now I judged myself to be nearing the enemy's outworks), when I all but stumbled into a deep trench that ran at right angles to our line of defence, and likewise, I supposed, to their line of attack. A little marvelling both at its depth and its direction (which, taken together, should have told me its purpose as plain as a label), I nevertheless lost no time in clambering down into it; and scarce a minute after heard the measured steps of a sentry pacing to and fro near its edge. A minute earlier, and he had seen me; a minute later, and, screened by the lingering dusk and by the depth of the trench, I passed him unsuspected. So signal a piece of good fortune at the very outset of mine enterprise seemed a sure earnest of success therein, and sent my spirits up so high that doubtless I had become foolhardy, but for a sound of voices that next minute came to mine ears, and brought back both my tremors and my caution. But I

passed the speakers as I had the sentry, holding my breath the while.

After that I followed my friendly ditch or trench (for it appeared to be a mixture of the two, running at the side of a hedge, but too deep and wide to be merely the common accompaniment of that) to where it presently came to an end. This it did abruptly, at a gap in the said hedge; I was about to pass through the gap, as several signs gave indication was the habit of those that used the trench as their pathway, when I was aware of approaching footsteps on the other side of the hedge. Scarce knowing what I did or why I did it, I walked forward upon mine own side of it as if to meet them; when we were almost abreast of each other, I dropped swiftly and silently down upon the ground, crouching as close to the hedge as I could. They came through the gap into the field where I was, and at that I promise you my heart beat loud enough to deafen me to all besides. But they turned into the trench without looking behind them, one after another, eight in all. 'Twas the third time I had escaped detection; and now I knew the meaning and object of the trench. It was neither more nor less than the entrance to a mine they were driving, somewhat prolonged within their own lines, no doubt because a ditch existed there before, and lent itself to conceal the miners. It had lent itself besides to the concealment of some one else on this occasion, and she owed them some thanks for having preserved a shelter so friendly.

The drumming of my heart had all but quieted to its common pitch, when a voice in the lane at the other side of the hedge set it going again as hard as ever.

"Well, now, Clancarty," it said, "ye won't fail us? The mine's to be finished to-night by ten of the clock. You'll be ready to make the assault at the same moment."

"That I will, as sure as you say it," returned a boyish voice, "or may the devil fly away with me and my men!"

The speaker was so near me that by putting my hand through the hedge I could have touched him; the voices of both were clear, not loud, but not mistrustful neither, nor cautious. It was plain that I was well within the enemy's lines, for they walked and talked like men that were upon their own ground.

"Is it not written in the Book of the Prophecies of — Faith, I've forgotten the name of the prophet," continued the second speaker—"that a Clancarty's to knock at the gates of Derry? I'll be he, by all the signs."

At that he laughed.

"You've tried it once already," said the other, "and made but little of it."

"'Twas some one else that made at it," said he that was called Clancarty, "and what he made was not little, but great—a great uncomfortable bump upon a skull that was none of his, but mine. But this time we shall have other luck, or I'll know the reason why."

The other said a word or two that I did not catch; then, as the former party had done, they came through the gap in the hedge, and I could hear Clancarty's answer plainly.

"I go to reconnoitre at present," said he, "as you to see after your mining. Good luck go with you!"

"We might walk back in company," said the other, "if it's agreeable to you."

"Agreeable, certainly!" rejoined the lad, "if 'twere possible; but that's just what it's not, I regret to say. I'm ordered to parade my men before the Marshal—bad luck to him for an old pedant!—and must strike across the bog as soon as I've made my observations, to get at them in time."

"Across the bog? nonsense!" said the other speaker. "You'll have all the marksmen in Derry trying to pick you off."

"I can keep out of range, I suppose," said the other, with his merry laugh. "But, Lord! O'Neill, if these folks in Derry did but know their opportunity! they'll never have such another. There won't be a man left of ours on the east side of Ballougry Hill in a couple of hours; so much for Von Rosen's parade."

"They won't know it, you see," said O'Neill; "and if they did, they'd have to pass our trenches to get any good of their knowledge, for aught I can see."

Here was a piece of information worth the listening for, and it came at the punctual moment to be of service; for I was turning it back and forth in my mind whether to accost these two gentlemen in my pretended character of peasant, or to wait another chance. A fairer I could not wish for; but when I thought myself still far too near our own lines to escape suspicion. Now I knew that, if these gentlemen were to be trusted (and their intelligence seemed of the most precise), I had but to lie hid until the hour of the muster, and might then go whither I pleased on the eastern side of Ballougry Hill, without any pass at all.

It seemed a piece of incredible carelessness that such an approach to the city should be left unguarded ; yet what I had overheard had the unmistakable ring of truth. To be sure, they had no reason to apprehend any attempt to relieve the city from that quarter ; and as they thought so safely mewed up within our fortress (which was also our prison), that they might leave us out of the account. Verily, 'tis to us spies—for since this enterprise of mine I have counted myself of that guild and fraternity—that generals should come, to be warned of these little negligences and omissions that do hinder their campaigns of success, and themselves of glory !

But 'twould never do to linger where I was until the return squadron of miners came up and took me prisoner ; and the light was brightening every moment. I walked forward in the friendly shelter of the hedge (but keeping in the field, not in the lane) as quickly as I could, without looking like a fugitive. Here and there I had cross-fences to pass ; the fact that there never lacked a space between these and the great hedge—ay, and that a space well trodden into a footpath—brought my heart into my throat at every one of them, lest I should meet some reconnoitring party upon its rounds. Here and there, too, there was an open space in the great hedge itself ; these also I passed in fear and trembling, after peeping and spying awhile to make sure there was none in the lane to see me. But never, sure, were these hedges half so serviceable to them that planted them, or to them that spared them, as they were that morning to the trembling creature that crept past them, growing more fearful with every footstep that passed in the lane—there were not many—and shrinking closer to their screen with every pulse of the brightening light.

CHAPTER XLI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

PRESENTLY both lane and hedges came to an end at the entrance to a farmyard ; and here I drew back behind one of them, to consider what now were the best course for me to pursue. It needed not even a woman's poor knowledge of warfare to tell me that such a place as this was certain to be occupied by the enemy. The question I would fain have had some answer to, before going any nearer, was whether the owners were there with them under protection, or had gone away. And for a little while nothing happened to help me to solve the riddle.

One thing counselled caution, and that (if the paradox be allowed me) with a voice loud in proportion to its silence ; 'twas the lack of the farm-dog's barking. He had been an added danger to me had he been there, as calling notice to my stranger-hood ; but I feared his absence meant a worse. I found myself wondering, in a vague and pointless fashion, if he were eaten, as most of ours in Derry were ere this ; then I smiled at the folly of the thought ; for, sure, in the country they were pushed to no such straits. But all the same, I lay concealed beside the hedge, and waited some further indication for my guidance. And as I waited, the sun came up, flooding the whole world with the heavenliest blue radiance ; methought I had never seen him rise since I saw him last in the country. The dewy freshness and fragrance—how pungent-sweet it was, and yet how bitter ; sweet to the nostril, bitter to the thought, as adding form and clearness to the image of all we had renounced for a duty we might never accomplish, a gain we stood yet in danger of being balked of !

As I waited, methought I heard a door open, and thereafter

came to mine ears the sound of voices ; one, a man's, was low and muffled, as of one that desired to escape notice ; the other, a woman's, was clear and sharp, and perhaps a thought louder than was needful, as of one that courted it. It seemed as though the speakers were approaching me, for very soon I could hear something of what was said.

"And some one's sure to come while you're absent from your post," I made out, in the woman's voice. "Then you know what you'll get."

By the sound of the man's voice, he seemed to be imploring caution ; and he gave an example of what he desired, for not a word of what he said could I distinguish. The woman, instead of complying with his humour, spoke rather higher and clearer than before.

"Ah, then, come if ye like," said she, "though it's no use in the world you'll be of. But don't blame me if you get into trouble after it."

At that the other voice seemed, muffled as it was, to reply in a tone of irritation. The woman's rang out in a laugh as she replied :

"And that's a neat compliment, sure," said she. "I'll keep it in mind, Mr. Sergeant, the next time you come into my kitchen, with your flattery and cupboard-love."

With that a young and pretty woman ran from the farmyard into the lane and stopped at the gate of the very field where I was hidden, with a muttered malediction that I supposed was levelled at her military admirer. But he did not follow her. She did not open the gate, but leant upon it, shading her eyes with her hands from the dewy sunlight which seemed to send tiny rainbows dazzling into one's eyes from every twig of the hedge-tops, and scanned the country in all directions. How I escaped her notice I know not ; sure, the light itself must have been my veil.

Here, I thought, was my opportunity, could I but muster up the courage to grasp it. A woman—and a young and frank-looking woman to boot—could there be happier chance ? I thought not, and determined to accost her.

But, as if the one half of me was in league with the enemy against the other, and had its charge to hinder me in every way, I presently found me almost powerless with mere timorous shrinking. I, that had ever despised your trembling, fluttering creatures, now found mine ears deafened and my voice choked, so that I

scarce could do mine own will. 'Twas less, I think, the thought of danger than the knowledge that this was the turning-point of mine enterprise. If I failed to gain this girl, my plan was already frustrate and hopeless. If, on the other hand, I should have the good hap to obtain her assistance, I had as little doubt but I should bring it to a successful issue.

She leant upon the gate a dozen yards from me, or scarce so much. A whisper would have reached her ears, but I was powerless to utter that whisper. But since I must seize this chance at once, or else forego it altogether, I rose from my crouching posture, came forward from the shadow I had hid in, and stood beside her, silent, or ever she was aware.

At first I thought she took me for a spectre, for she gazed upon me with a startled hush; the sunlight in her eyes gave them a look of being dazed and bewildered.

"Lord be good to us, Peggy!" said she the next moment; "what have you done to yourself?" Then, seeing that I was not Peggy: "Or who are you at all, at all?" she asked me.

'Twas her honest face, I think, that made me decide to trust her wholly. I laid my hand upon her arm.

"Would you help a mother in sore distress?" I asked her.

She looked at me with a keen inquiry in those eyes that a minute before had been so dazzled.

"Surely," said she, "so it can be done innocently."

"Yourself shall judge," I answered, "if you will bring me where we can speak together without fear of interruption or of listening ears."

"That last," said she, "is none so easy." She knit her brows, seeming to meditate for a moment. Then she looked at me with an odd kind of laugh. "Can ye milk?" she asked me.

I told her that I could.

"Our dairy-woman," said she, "is nowhere to be seen this morning, and 'tis long past the time when the cows should be milked. If you will play the milkmaid, and help me with them, you'll do me a favour, and if I can return it I'll be pleased and glad."

Her speech and manner were above what her appearance betokened, and presently she showed a quick and kindly eye as well, for as I came into the lane beside her, she took note of my faltering gait; 'twas nothing but strung feeling that caused my knees

to shake, and I could have beaten myself for it. She set it down to weariness.

"You are tired," said she. "No doubt you've wandered out of your way, and have come a long journey. Sit down where you were under the hedge. I can bring them in by myself well enough, now that there's so few of them, and you'll help me to drive them into the yard when I get them here."

But now that I had found a friend I could not bear to lose sight of her, lest I might fall in with some one whose questions might be worse to parry. So, though my limbs cried out to me to profit by her advice, my will said nay, and I kept beside her, and was glad of it, too, for a minute or two later an officer on horseback padded past us, doubtless on his way to the front. Whether he had marked me for a stranger had I been alone, I know not; what is certain is that, seeing me in this girl's company, he passed me without so much as a glance of suspicion.

Dear! the fragrance of that country milking! Shall I ever forget it? It was almost too penetrating after the stench and faintness of the air of the town, and gave me a pleasure that was akin to sickness. The fresh milk, as it bubbled and frothed in the pail, set me all on edge with longing to taste it, with loathing of the thought of the hateful things the folk in the town were glad to eat. I fell a-longing for Rosa and the children. Were they but with me, I thought, to drink of the warm fresh milk, and breathe the fresh sweet air, how speedily would the wasted limbs and faces round themselves out again! How soon would health and vigour return to the languid frames! Were they but with me, what need to retrace our steps into the famine-struck, plague-smitten town? Might we not find us some small and sheltered corner where we could live concealed until the war was over and past? Had we not done enough and suffered enough, and was it not for others now to take up the burden that our shoulders were grown too weary to bear any longer?

'Twas a passing weakness that angered me at myself for one minute, and the next I could have laughed at it. I bought me a porringerful of the warm new milk, and drank it slowly while I sat at the work of drawing more; and I promise you that these fantasies survived not the first mouthful. For was I not doing my best for those I would fain have helped to their fill of it, and could not?

The milking being over, the selling of the milk came next; for

by that time the farmyard was full of men that waited for it, each with his money in his hand. My pretty countrywoman, I thought, was in the fair way to make her fortune, should the war continue. I marvelled not a little at the civil behaviour of the soldiers, until I understood that they were for the most part the servants of officers, who bought the milk for their masters. When she was rid of the last drop of her merchandise, my friend signed to me to follow her into the house, which I did with the most submissive mien I could attain to. She was in possession of the most of my story before we had finished driving in the cows; now she asked me but one or two questions, and that in a way that showed she meant to help me.

She brought me into her kitchen, which was rather empty and bare for the living-room of so prosperous a place.

"I'd ask you," said she, "to sit down here and rest you, but I doubt 'twould scarce be safe; there are so many of all sorts coming and going this morning. It might raise a question you'd find it none so easy to reply to. You'd be safer to be doing something, if any one should take it into his head to look in. Maybe you'd make believe to be cleaning up while I'm away?"

"Nay," said I, "but why should I make believe? I'd be glad to do anything to serve you, after your kindness to me; and I know country service well enough."

"I'll be sworn you do!" said she, with a look that was as keen as the edge of an Irish skean. "With hands like that, now, who could doubt it?"

But I, too, could use mine eyes to some purpose. I took one of her own hands, and held it alongside of mine without a word; then I looked her in the eyes, and she laughed again.

"It's 'least said, soonest mended' with the pair of us, perhaps," said she; "and there are other ways of hiding than skulking behind a hedge, as maybe you'll have reason to know before you get back to—where you came from. I ask no more confidences than I'm mistress of, at present; but, mark you, your good star's high in heaven this morning; for we have a very great man to our guest, and I have a passable reason for desiring speech of him. I mean to ask him for a pass to Carrigans and back for you, as some return for the loss of my milkmaid, that I fear hath been wiled away by some of these fine followers of his."

"Shall I need it, do you think?" said I. "For in an hour or

little more the river-bank will be as bare of men as the river-bed. They'll all be off parading before the Marshal at Brookhall."

"Supposing they are," said she, "will they be there all day? You'll be safer with it than without it, anyhow; and give me leave to tell you there's no sense in refusing any help that may lift a lame dog over a stile."

Even while we were talking, the house was full of the noise of coming and going, and of the clanking of weapons. So was the yard without; and the door was opened once, but closed again as speedily. When she left me, I waited not a moment, but fell to work "making believe" with so good a will that presently my hands were of the most unimpeachable grime.

That this was my safety I had soon good reason to know; for the door was opened in very deed, and an Irish dragoon came into the kitchen.

"Good luck to ye, Peggy, jewel of the world that you are!" said he. "Hast niver a word for me this morning, nor a glance out of your sparklin' eyes at all my bravery? Musha! isn't it a couple of sweet kisses you'll be afther givin' me for comin' to show you meself in all me glory?"

And he came towards me with his arms outstretched, as though to embrace me. The heart in my breast seemed to stop beating, as I hovered on the very brink of detection. But I kept mine eyes upon my broom, and my shoulder towards the ruffian soldier.

A comrade checked him from the doorway.

"Is it crazy you are?" whispered he, in an ecstasy. "Here's the Colonel coming down the stair."

The other turned upon his heel with an oath.

"It's as curst as a young fox she is, anyhow," said he, "after the scolding her mistress hath given her for being late. It's to bite a man she'd do, rather than to reward him as he deserves, this morning. What! not a word yet? Begorra! you'll have found your tongue——"

But at that the comrade caught him by the shoulder and drew him away, and the next moment my new-found friend took his place, with a face made up of terror and inquiry. I tried to bring a smile to my lips to reassure her; but they would continue their trembling, in spite of me.

"He suspects nothing," I made a shift to pronounce. "He thinks I am Peggy in a fit of the sulks with him."

"God be thanked for all His mercies!" said she, sitting down on a chair. "I thought we were both lost."

We looked at each other for a moment, part in lingering fright and part in thankfulness; and then, with one consent, burst out laughing, as though my escape and hers were the merriest of jests.

"Here's your pass," said she, giving me a paper. "In half an hour you may begone. They are all mustering in the yard this moment, if you care to go to the window and see them."

"I thank you," I said. "I think I'm as safe out of view."

"By the way," said she, "you'd best be made aware of the name you bear, for fear of accidents. Not knowing your own, I made bold to christen you by one belonging to a friend of mine that hath a house at Carrigans. 'Twas a piece of your luck that the Colonel was in such a hurry to get to horse, or else perhaps I might have had to produce you to his inquiry, not knowing what you were to call yourself."

Judge if I thought so, too, when opening the paper I read this:

"To all Christian persons to whom these shall come. This is to certify that Mercy Rose of Carrigans hath leave from me to pass to that place and return to her friends at Ballymagrorty.

"PATRICK SARSFIELD."

"You know him?" said my friend, looking at my face.

"Well," said I, "had I gone to the window a minute ago, when you asked me, I wonder what had become of the pair of us."

"He had never turned his head to look at you," said she. "Your good star's high, as I told you, and it's not the part of a friend to keep you back till it begins to decline, or else I wouldn't let you set a foot across the doorsill till you were rested and refreshed."

But as it was, we gave them half an hour to be gone out of my way; and then, armed with this pass, which was enough to protect me, I thought, should I fall in with any stragglers or laggards on their way to the great parade, I set forth upon my walk to Carrigans.

What I said to her that had so greatly befriended me I scarce knew then, and know not now; but it was something that had

some of the heat of my gratitude in it, for she put her arm about my shoulders and kissed me on the cheek.

"The day may come—who knows?" said she—"when you may be able to do as much for me."

It may; but until now it hath not. Nor have I since that morning either seen the face of mine unknown friend, or discovered who she was.

CHAPTER XLII.

HOW MRS. HAMILTON FELL IN WITH ONE FRIEND AND TWO FOES.

I MIGHT now, armed with my pass, have pursued my way along the highroad ; but I judged it wiser, as well as pleasanter, to bear to the left along the river-bank. But all ways have their own dangers round a town that is besieged, and though I easily contrived to skirt the camp itself, I was once or twice upon the very brink of falling into an encampment of the wild Irish followers, which had been a worse difficulty to get out of. But after a time I left these too behind, and then began to conceit myself that my enterprise was as good as accomplished now that the obstacles thereto were all surmounted and left behind.

Alas ! the one obstacle I had never taken thought of now began to threaten me most shrewdly with failure, and that was mine own miserable weakness. What was the walk to Carrigans to a strong young woman like me ? Nothing. A trifle—a morning's diversion. And now that it was, as one might say, almost within my view, I began to find my limbs faltering beneath me, and my strength so thoroughly gone that 'twas out of my power to go a step further until I had rested again.

Perhaps it was the sight of mine own dear home that drew all the last of my strength into eyesight and memory ; for it was just over against me, with its topmost turrets and windows full in view above the belt of trees, when I broke down altogether. I sat me down upon the ground where I was, and fell to longing for the wings of a dove, that I might fly to it and find me a messenger there instead of at Carrigans, and so be free to return to the city.

The sun was hot and high, and beat upon my head in the open

field, and then I bethought me of a little thicket over against the Cloncalla brook (in the mouth of which I had used to keep mine own little boat in happier times). It was but a few steps distant. I rose, and, dragging my wearied limbs toward it, presently gained its shade.

When persons of mine acquaintance have related in my hearing the story of enterprises of their own that they have brought to a happy issue, it hath often moved my wonder to mark how they have held to their first plan in spite of all difficulties, bending adverse influences to their aid by mere force of will. With me it hath commonly been the exact contrary, and 'tis oftener by bending to circumstances than by subduing them that I have gained mine end at last. On this day, everything in the world seemed in league to befriend and further me; and here, at the moment of my greatest discouragement, occurred the strangest instance of this their complaisance.

For, having gained the little thicket, I was on the point of casting me down to rest in its covert, when there came to mine ears the whispering plash of the river against its shore, clear in the morning stillness. Sure, there is never another sound in the world so sweet, unless it be the music of the mounting lark, that is the melody most proper to its burden. Its invitation tempted me and strengthened me to take the few last steep steps that lay between me and its brink. Having accomplished them, I saw, there at my very feet, mine own little boat. I knew her at the first glance. Near her on the bank there was a man bending over some task that I took not the time to observe, for at the sound of my rustling footsteps he raised his head, and looked me in the face; and whom should it be but Rabbie Wilson, our old Scotch gardener!

My task was accomplished now, in good sooth, I thought; and I put out my hand to him without a word, having scarce the breath to utter one betwixt the surprise and the scramble. To mine amazement, he looked me in the face without a sign of recognition, as though I were a person he had never set eyes on till that moment.

"Well, lass," said he; and, sure, there never was a sound more homely in any ears than his manner of speech to mine; "and wha may you be that's sae couthie and genty and white in the face?"

"Rabbie," said I, finding my voice in a moment, "is it possible you do not know me?"

He shaded his eyes with his hand, and an odd change passed over his countenance.

"Na, na," said he. "Sic a thing wadna be permitted. Dinna tell me you're my mistress!"

"Why not?" said I, "when that is what I am; or was, at least, in former days."

"Dead," said Rabbie—"dead, and sae young an' sae bonny! Dead o' fair want an' famine! An', oh, the puir toon o' Derry, when the gentry tholes sic a weird!"

At that, seeing what he took me for—to wit, my own spectre, and a messenger of evil—I could not choose but laugh, and having begun, my laughter got the better of me, so that I could not leave it off, till at last I was fain to sit down upon the bank to indulge it, and to humour the trembling in my knees that would not pass away. He came nearer to me with a look of wonder, as one whose imaginings of how a ghost should comport itself were all astray. I put out my hand to him again.

"Rabbie," said I, "'tis I myself, and no spirit. 'Tis I myself in the flesh. But ghost or none, sure you'd never be afraid of me in the broad daylight."

At that he came quickly to my side, and took my hand in his; he looked from that to my face and back again.

"My leddy," said he—"my dear leddy! Eh, but you're sair wasted; ye maun hae had a sair time o't to gar ye look sae like a ghaist. I wunner if I'd ken Annot again, gin I were to see her." The pity in his eyes changed to a kind of fear and hesitation. "Maybe she'll no be leevin'," said he slowly.

"She is alive and well," I told him, "and not much altered—at least, to mine eyes, that see her often."

"She maun be as teuch as a rizzard haddock, then," said he, in a tone of indignation, whereat my lips took so ungovernable a fit of twitching that I could not help breaking out again into undisguised laughter. He looked at me gravely the while, as one that marvelled at the folly of a creature so easily moved to mirth. 'Tis a position in which we have often found ourselves, both before and since. But I was grave enough, and graver than himself, before I had finished answering the questions that he presently began to ply me with.

"But now," said I to him, having satisfied his inquiries—"now my task is at an end, and mine errand accomplished, for you will be my messenger to Colonel Kirke; you will tell him all

I have told you. Make him understand the straits we are brought to ; sure, when he knows them he'll delay no longer, but will come at once to our relief."

"I fear that's oot o' my pooer," said he, very slowly, as one that is forced to utter the thing he loathes.

"Don't say so!" I exclaimed. "You're old—that's true; but the fate of the whole city—I say not of the kingdom, but it's no less—hangs, perhaps, upon that message."

"It canna be borne by me," said he more firmly; "an' grieved I am to say it. It's no the age—there's mony a guid day's wark yet in Rabbie. But I gied ma promise, when I took protection, neither to act against King James nor yet to assist his enemies; to do your errant wad be baith o' them—an' mair's the pity."

"It's the last thing I'd ask of you," said I, "to break your plighted word—even to do the greatest service in the world to your friends and to your country. God's strength aiding me, I'll even try to find my way to the fleet myself."

I rose to my feet as I spoke; but God, alas! had granted me no such renewed strength as I hoped; and the action was enough to show me how futile were any such attempt on my part. Whoever should take to Kirke the tale of our extremity, I was convinced that it would never be Mary Hamilton.

Rabbie saw the admission written on my face.

"You're no sae daft!" said he; "that I suld say sic a word to my mistress! You're ower sair forfoughten wi' the read you've come already, to pit fit to gr'und on sic a journey. Na, na! ye'll hae to seek anither messenger; an' you'll hae to rest a wee before you do e'en sae muckle. Sit ye doon in your ain bonny boat—she's gey an' snod, considerin' a' thing—an' I'll tak' ye tentily ower the river to a bieldy bit I ken o', that's as safe frae rovin' fit as it is frae rovin' e'e."

I could not gainsay him; 'twas even but too evident that I must rest before I could go further afield to find me one that I knew would be my messenger. As tenderly as though I were a child did Rabbie place me in the boat, and it seemed but a minute after that he was helping me out in the little cove at the other side. After that he led me, by a marvellous intricate path he had contrived, up the steep bank, through the tangle of brushwood, and so into mine own pleasant wilderness, which now was such a maze of salallows as never eye of man beheld before in a garden.

Through that also did he lead me, and presently brought me, altogether bewildered, to the door of the little summer-house; it was as thick beset in front with willows as it was behind, so that I did not marvel that he should say it was as safe from roving eye as from roving foot. But the house itself was as fairly kept as ever; and never, sure, did any wayfarer hail any resting-place with greater thankfulness than I the sight of it.

Being seated there—and never till that moment, I thought, had I known the worth of shade and coolness—the old man left me, disappearing among the willows with extraordinary rapidity. Before long he returned, bringing in one hand a piece of fair white bread, the like of which I had not seen for months, and in the other a green leaf filled with the most beautiful red ripe strawberries that ever I saw in my life.

"Why, Rabbie," said I, "are these the fruit of the Virginia strawberries that you preferred to the company of all your friends in Derry? Have they escaped prowling foot and thievish hand, and repaid your care of them?"

"I've warrant them," returned the old man, with a very comical look of self-satisfaction. "Ye'll no see mony sic berries in Ireland, or I'm far oot in my reckonin'! Eat them up, ma leddy; there's plenty mair whaur thae cam' frae; thanks to the sauch busses, that naeboddy thinks o' warslin' his way through. Ay, there's a wheen *tra-footed craws* hereaway wad hae made short wark o' them, had they had but the least inklin' o' what was sae weel hidden ower the slope o' the hill. Eat them up!" he continued to exhort me, as I hesitated to touch the tempting morsels. "I tell ye there's routh o' them there-by for the gatherin'. Ay, and mair bread, to the bargain—though I daursay it's thievin' thae Papishers wad ca't, gin they saw me lift it, an' that though they'll never pay you plack or boddle either for the use o' your hoose or the destruction they've done til't."

He disappeared from my side, but returned almost immediately with a truss of dry hay, which he began to spread out upon the floor.

"Rest ye there," said he, when he had gotten it placed to his mind. "If ye get a sleep, 'twill be a' that the better. And in the meantime I'll——"

He hesitated, and then stopped, looking at me from under his brows the while with the strangest balancing expression that ever I saw on a human visage.

"Ay," said he, "I dinna ken; maybe it's a kind o' leein'. But the laddie's no far awa'—I could fetch him to your leddyship braw an' quickly—and blithe, blithe he'd be to do your errant—I ken that. But deil tak' me gin I hae ony clearness—I canna tell whether it be lawful or no (me bein' held back by ma promise gien to hae nae dealin's wi' the tae side nor the tither) to bring him to speech o' you!"

The solid ground seemed to turn with me, as I gathered his meaning from his broken words. There was, then, some one close at hand, ready and willing to be my messenger, if he but knew of my need; and yet by the old man's scruples I was like to be balked of him.

"Indeed, Rabbie," said I coldly (for though I could not but respect his reverence for his word, the same was like to cost me dear—and his vacillation moved mine anger), "I have little skill in the resolving of questions in casuistry: you must even settle that matter with your own conscience! But when you think that by detaining me here—in safety, I grant you—but out of the way of friends as well as foes, you may be keeping me from meeting that same messenger, and thus be serving the enemy——"

I ceased, for I saw that I had hit on a consideration that had weight with him.

"Dod! I'll risk it," quoth he; and therewith he left me.

The couch he had prepared me was as tempting as though it had been composed of down to one so weary as I. I laid me down upon it, with no purpose to sleep, and even with a little feeling of amusement that the old man should have thought that possible, in the situation I was in. But all of the world that I could see breathed peace and rest. The sigh of the summer breeze among the willow saplings, the gently-moving lights and shadows, the warmth and sweetness, soothed me like a lullaby. The hum of the bees around the open door was full of the very spirit of drowsiness; and before I knew that I felt their influence I must have yielded to it and fallen asleep.

The sun was westering when at last I awoke—or was awakened, rather—by the sound of a merry shout that was all as startling to me as the noise of a gunshot, for it was in a strange voice. I sat up, shaking in every limb.

"Ha, Patrique, mon ami, I am sroug!" it exclaimed in a tone of triumph. "Anozer struggle; it ees not far. Reach me ze hand—so!"

And by the sounds that accompanied the voice, I knew that two men or more were forcing their way through the thicket that Rabbie had deemed so impassable.

To attempt to fly was hopeless, and 'twas equally so to expect that my shelter should pass unobserved. I rose from my couch of dry hay and seated myself upon the summer-house bench with as much composure as I could muster; but, in truth, 'twas scarce enough to swear by, as the saying hath it. Beads of sweat started out upon my brow, and my knees knocked together as I sat.

"Zat old fox of Rabbie," said the voice that had spoken before—"nevare did he zink we should discover zis nest in ze wood."

"It hath the look of a pleasure-house," said another voice, "and doubtless hath been so, before these troubles began."

"And doubtless so eet ees still," said the first speaker. "Zere is no—how do you say?—decay?—désordre?"

"No neglect, ye would say," said the second speaker. "No more there is. We'll even have a look at what he keeps inside; not garden-tools, I'll lay you a gold Jacobus."

They were at the very door by this time, and the closeness of the danger brought back some of my courage. I sat still where I was; but my lips and hands ceased to tremble. The next moment a tall, fair man appeared in the doorway, followed closely by one that was shorter and darker, and had a pair of singular bright black eyes in his face. He muttered a whole string of foreign oaths and exclamations. But the Englishman, as I judged him, turned towards him with a laugh.

"Beshrew me, but it's better than I looked for!" said he.

"We are come through the enchanted wood, and here we find the wood-nymph awaiting us."

I rose from my seat with a bob-curtsey and a "What's your will?" that, upon my word, were a credit to me, for they passed muster with these new-comers.

"What's our will, do you say?" said the Englishman. "Upon my life, my pretty lass, 'tis to make your better acquaintance. I may speak for the pair of us, I believe, Pointee?" said he to his companion.

"Mais certainement!" quoth he. "Eet ees too fair a chance for us to turn ze back upon eet."

"'Twill be my father you're in search of," said I.

"Your father? And who may he be?" said the Englishman. "Not that I care to know; for were he the best man that ever wore shoe-leather, his daughter's a fair substitute for him."

With that he would have taken me by the hand; but I fetched him so shrewd a rap upon the knuckles that he drew back his with greater speed than he had held it forth. The Frenchman broke out laughing.

"She ees—how you say?—coy—ze nymph of ze sicket!" said he. "Shall ve beg her to give us ze favour of her company at our lodging, Patrique? Eet is somewhat larger zan her own."

"'Tis an invitation that mere politeness requires of us," said the other, with a mocking bow. "Come along, my pretty witch, or dryad, or whatever you may be. In a word, you are our prisoner. No lingering; come at once."

And with that he laid his hand on mine arm in good sooth, and led me out of the little summer-house.

But I, though glad to be in the open, was not minded to lose my liberty thus tamely.

"By your leave, gentlemen both," said I, "I'd be glad to know how you can pretend to take prisoner a harmless country wench that is travelling with a pass signed by one of your own generals."

Upon my word, I did assume the very manner of a timid, whimpering country lass, plucking up a spirit in the presence of her betters, so that I could not but admire mine own mimicry; and the amusement I felt put me in heart to go on with the masque.

"A pass, have you?" said the Englishman. "Let us see it."

Forth I plucked my pass, and first I held it out towards him, and then I drew it back.

"You shall read it over my shoulder, sir, an it like you," said I, with my bob-curtsey; "but I beg you will not ask me to give it out of my hand, for, sure, I feel no safety without it."

He glanced it over.

"Patrick Sarsfield!" said he. "A fig for Patrick Sarsfield! What do you think his pass is worth? Are there no other colonels in the King's army save he? This gentleman"—and here he pointed to his friend—"hath a far higher command than Sarsfield's, being the Commander-in-Chief of the artillery—no less. He will give you a pass—so you will but crave it as you should—worth ten of this."

"Nay, sir," said I—but I promise you I began to quake again—"Colonel Sarsfield's, by your leave, is good enough for me, so you and this other honourable gentleman will but acknowledge it."

"Rose," he went on, taking no notice of what I had said—"Mercy Rose. Now, I dare swear I have some acquaintance with one named Rose at Carrigans. Is not your father a saddler?"

"Mine uncle, sir," said I, quaking more than before; for now I began to fear I had got myself into the toils indeed. "No, sir; truly, my father is but a labouring man, and nothing likely to be known of your honour."

"Nay," said he, "but I dare be sworn I have met him somewhere, and, strike me dead! his daughter shall not lack mine entertainment. Go on, go on, to the house. Never did I meet your match for obstinacy. Go on."

"If you will not be gainsaid, sir," said I, "even lead on. I will follow."

But now it was the Frenchman's turn to break out laughing.

"Veel you so?" said he. "I have hear such a tale before. I am not born yesterday. I veel lead; you shall follow me, and Patrique, he vill follow you to make sure zat you—how you say?—geev us no slip."

Now I began to think all was lost indeed, and Master Pointis, as now I learn that his name should be written, began to bend the fallows to right and left of him, so to make a lane among them through which I might pass; for Rabbie's devious path they had not noticed, nor, indeed, could I myself see the entrance thereof, so cunningly did it wind in and out. But, turning my head in mere despair to make one last appeal to the other, I saw a little figure pass quickly out from behind the summer-house.

"Take hold, Patrique," says Master Pointis.

And he did take hold of the saplings to right and left of me, so enclosing me, as it were, in a cage; for Mr. Pointis was just in front, bending away the next. Of a sudden the saplings the other had taken hold of sprang up around me, and he fell back with a kind of sobbing groan. I felt my hand grasped, and was pulled quickly back, and round to the side of the summer-house, before Master Pointis could make his way from the entanglement he stood in to see what detained his comrade—ay, and before I myself could rightly comprehend what had happened. When I did, I was standing between Rabbie Wilson and Gorman O'Cahan,

safe within the scarce visible entrance of the pathway whereby he had led me up to the summer-house at first. The Frenchman was gotten free from the fallows, and was bending over his friend, who seemed at first to give a few faint struggles, and then lay perfectly still.

"Hist!" whispered Gorman very low—for, indeed, there were not ten yards of distance between the Frenchman and ourselves, and it was but the soft rustling of the summer breeze in the bushes that let him from hearing what the lad said as well as we—"hist! he's in a trap; I shall have him as well as the other."

But at the thought of it, and at the sight of the skean that Gorman lifted as he said the words, a shuddering took me that was like to make me cry aloud.

"Nay, nay," I whispered, "no more killing; we are safe enough; let him be."

Rabbie turned without a word, and led the way down the steep bank towards the river. But before we had taken many steps, the thought of what I had seen—to wit, a strong, masterful man cut off in a moment in the pride of his strength and the midst of his masterful wickedness—proved more than I could bear; I could go no further. I sat me down where I was, betwixt the old man and the lad, and there fell to sobbing and crying as if my heart would break.

CHAPTER XLIII.

HOW MRS. HAMILTON RETURNED TO THE CITY.

IN no long time my weeping, having free course, stanch'd itself, and then I quickly understood that Gorman O'Cahan was he that Rabbie had brought to be my messenger. A better I could not wish, and, indeed, he had carried so many messages successfully already to my knowledge that I began to feel assured that this also was as good as done the moment he undertook it. There was little sign of his ensigncy as yet, either in his attire or in his manners. His clothes were what they had ever been, neither worse nor better; his smile was as wide and as Irish as ever. But when he began to tell me in his old way, at once shy and zealous, how ready he was to set out at once upon mine errand, in good sooth I deemed that Irish smile of his the pleasantest that ever I had seen in my life.

"An' what is it I'm to say to the General, lady dear?" quoth he.

At that I began and told him, point by point, all that I judged most likely to move Kirke to attempt our relief. I bade him recall to the mind of the Major-General how ill provided we had been at the very first, so that, in the judgment of those who came from England to our aid, it was vain to attempt any defence at all. I described to him how, at Kirke's first coming, finding ourselves in reasonable hope of speedy victory, we had permitted ourselves to be more liberal of our victual than perhaps was wise; and then I went on to narrate how, when despair took hold upon us at the thought of this our folly, when we saw ourselves deserted by him, God had set bounds to the same by means of the very violence of the enemy; their bombs breaking into and discovering to us

stores that no one in the town knew aught about, and without which we had long ago succumbed. But I bade him tell the Major-General how, in the very moment of his turning his back upon us, when we came nearer to flat despair than at any other time, the mere suggestion that now was the time for us to make terms with the enemy had set the whole town ringing with shouts of "No surrender!"

And after that (seeing by the eyes of my listener that not a word I said would be lost, but would be delivered in the ears of the Major-General even as I spoke them) I went on to describe the daily-growing pinch of want. I related how, from the moment of the fleet's departure, plague and famine began to do their work and to reap their harvest. I told them how men, women, and children began to drop dead or dying in the very streets, slain not more by want of food than by the stench of the town and the pestilence it bred. And then, coming to the driving of the Protestants beneath the walls, I told them how, in the moment of their sorest suffering, their one prayer to us was that we should not lessen our chance of victory by mercy shown to them, or by taking them into the city.

The wonder in their eyes put me, as it were, at such a distance from that I spoke of (which was become an old story to me) that I could see it as they did.

"Ay," said I, "'twas marvellous constancy, was it not?—a kind of miracle in self-devotion. But ours matched it, for we refrained from taking them in."

But I went on to speak of the terrible straits the poorer sort were now reduced to, so that there was nothing too loathsome and revolting to be eaten; a cat or a dog was long ago become a toothsome morsel, so that now there were none of them left, and even a rat or a mouse had a price in money. I told them how we of the better sort, that had hitherto been able to provide ourselves with diet a little less nauseous, if scarce more plentiful, were fast being brought to the same case.

"But tell General Kirke," said I, "that no extremity will ever make us renounce the cause while we have strength to strike a blow for it or breath to raise a prayer for it. Tell him that whilst there's a single voice in Derry able to shout 'No surrender!' that's our watchword. Ask him for pity or else for shame to make one real attempt to help us, one effort that will give us a single chance of life and victory."

The lad, who had been listening with eyes and mouth as well as with his ears, threw himself upon his knees at my feet.

"If Kirke could hear yourself, me lady," said he, "sure, it's no man at all he'd be—sure, there's nivver a stone in the world as hard as his heart must be—if he'd refuse. Oh, lady darlint, whatever power's in me tongue, be assured I'll try it on that same General. I haven't been through it as you have, but, sure, it's a heart in me breast I have, and God," says he, "may send me success."

"Amen," said I.

"And amen," quoth Rabbie, in a very feeling manner. "That is," said he, pulling himself up sharply, "if I may say sae innocently; me haein' passed ma word no' to do naething to help ye."

"Sure, there's no breach of your promise in praying for us," said I.

"Wull ye warrant me o' that?" said he seriously. "Is it no' written that the effectual fervent prayer o' a righteous man availeth much?"

And now I had a difficulty of another sort to contend with, having to obtain permission of this, my servitor, to return to my friends. His first project (that I should inhabit the summer-house, and he, playing the raven to my Elijah, should bring me my food day by day) was proved impracticable by what had happened that afternoon; but now he became even tedious in the enumeration of the many safer hiding-places whereto he could conduct me. 'Twas to no purpose that I told him my will was set to return to the city; he met the announcement with the contrary one, "Ye canna be sae daft!" And when I persisted in my determination, he met me with flat rebellion against my will.

"De'il a boat you'll get frae me," said he, "for a' she be your ain, to tak' ye ony sic gait."

At that, fearing lest my plan should be frustrate, after all, through his obstinacy, I fell to pleading.

"Say no more, Rabbie," I begged him. "Don't you know that my son is in the city?"

"He's in guid hands, I suppose?" said the old man severely.

"But, Rabbie," said I—and though I desired to use persuasion, I know not how it was that my voice sounded stern and harsh—"oh, Rabbie, he is not well."

He looked at me in a questioning manner for a moment; then

turned upon his heel and began to put the boat in order to set me across the river.

Happily for me, it presently occurred to him that, now my business was finished and mine errand despatched, 'twas no contravention of his promise, but the reverse, to pack me back into the city, whither the enemy had driven in any men of ours that they had discovered outside of our lines. 'Twas a kind of making things even for his bringing me to speech of my messenger. After that he tried no more to set hindrances in my way, but, on the contrary, was so desirous to further my return that he was easily prevailed upon to let me have the boat altogether. In pursuance of the same idea, his conscience permitted him to make another expedition into the house—but this time more in the way of barter than of theft—in search of something for me to eat. He returned with a small loaf of bread (of the same fair quality as that he had brought me in the morning), whereof I ate none, but wrapped it in a napkin, so that I could carry it. After that he gave me a little basket—but 'twas as much as I could carry—filled with strawberries, laid on fair green leaves, so as that they should not destroy each other's freshness. When I thought of the children's faces when they should see this feast, I promise you I thought myself well repaid for the trouble and danger I had undergone, even if nothing else should come of my enterprise.

"Dod!" said Rabbie, "I dinna ken hoo ye are to mak' your way doon the river; in little mair than a mile ye'll be in the thick o' their sentries, and then what'll ye dae?"

"It's kinder," I said, "to keep you in ignorance of that; I may say, for your comfort, that I deem myself indifferent safe, but that's all I'll tell you."

"I wadna wunner," he returned, "but you're safe there nor here, for they're in a terrible takin' there up-by about that Captain Patrick that hath come by his death the day. An' it's you they blame for't, the lass that came here to visit her feyther on her road to Carrigans."

"See, then," said I, "I am better to get me gone at once." And so put out into the river, and let its current carry me down, with scarce a dip of the oars to help it. He stood upon the bank watching me as long as he could see me; and, in good sooth, for all he thought it a thing forbid to pray for us as combatants, there are few things I am more sure of than that he had leave of his conscience to desire my safety as an individual—ay, and to pray

for it, too ; for his eyes were as moist as a maid's when he gave my boat the push that sent her out into mid-stream.

And the river carried me on as softly as a dream ; but, for all that, dreaming or soothing was the last thing I had in my mind ; for though I spoke so confidently to Rabbie, my adventure of the afternoon had a little shaken my belief in the efficacy of Sarsfield's pass ; nor could I close mine eyes to the fact that I ran some risk. The sun was down, but the twilight lingers long in July. It was certain that, on the river, of all places, the enemy would be alert and vigilant. But for one thing, I had waited in some hidden nook till darkness should be quite fallen ; but I had heard (as hath been set down) that an attack was planned against the city, to be made that night at ten of the clock, and I conceived it my duty to push on, if by any chance I might bring them news of it in time to be of use. But in the peaceful deepening of the twilight, strife began to appear a thing so unnatural as to be scarce credible. The stillness round about me so wrought with me that the events of the day began to seem dream-like and fantastic, not to be acted upon. I sat up in my boat, keeping her in mid-channel with scarce an effort, and drawing full and easy breath in a kind of unreasoning hope that I should be able, after all, to attain mine end unmolested. A sudden shout broke my dream to shivers, and my hope as well.

" Boat ahoy ! " cried some one from the bank. " What boat is that ? "

The river there is wide : I deemed it wide enough to give me a pretext for going on without heeding his shout, as though I had not heard it. He repeated it, and that in a tone there was no ignoring :

" What boat's that ? Answer, or I fire ! "

In truth, I had no mind to have every sentinel on the river-bank made to prick up his ears at the sound of a shot ; therefore I delayed no longer to make mine answer.

" A friend, with a pass," I cried, wondering if he would distinguish the words.

He did, and the rejoinder quickly followed :

" Approach, friend ; show the pass, and give the countersign."

It was with a quaking heart that I did as I was bid ; half minded, the while, to keep on my course and let him do his worst, since assuredly he could not overtake me. But the thought, how the bank of the river would bristle with enemies, should the sound

of the shot he threatened once put them on the alert, determined me to obey him ; and in I came.

He came down to the brink of the water to inspect the paper ; but as he held it upside-down, it was plain he could not read it. Therefore I offered to read it to him, and save his eyes ; laying the blame upon the failing light, so to keep his vanity upon my side.

" " This is to certify that Mercy Rose of Carrigans hath leave from me to pass to that place, and return to her friends at Ballymagrorty, " " I read. " And 'tis signed by Patrick Sarsfield, " I added.

" Sarsfield, quotha ? " said he. " What right hath Colonel Sarsfield to give a pass for the river, I'd like to know ? No one is allowed to go upon the river, my lass, save with a pass from Hamilton himself, countersigned by my Lord Louth, or by Sir Michael Creagh, or one of these generals that hath the keeping of it. "

I put mine apron up to mine eyes, and made as if I fell a-whimpering.

" And how was a poor maid to know that, I pray you ? " said I. " What am I to do, now that it's fallen so late ? Lack-a-day ! I'm in a pitiful case. "

" You'll have to go back where you came from, " said he, " and return by the road, as I suppose you went. "

" I did, " I said ; " but, ochone ! ochone ! the weary walk I'll have—in the middle of the night, too, and with so many abroad that would make no scruple about robbing a lone woman. " At that I thought my man pricked up his ears. " And my mistress has a terrible tongue, too, " I said, " when one doth linger but a moment in the farmyard. However shall I face her if I make so long delay as this is like to be ? "

Then I buried my face in mine apron, and pretended to cry bitterly.

" Come, come, " said he severely ; and his voice had altogether changed, and now was harsh and loud, " cease that folly. Robbed, say you. What's that you have which you fear to be robbed of ? "

I looked at him as though I debated some matter in mine own mind.

" If, for any reasonable share of it, you'd let me keep the rest, " said I, " and let me hold on my way down the river——. Sure, what can a single poor maid do to harm you ? "

"Come! how much have you?" said he angrily. "Let me see it."

"I have seven shillings," said I; and I made my voice tremble—sooth! there was very little difficulty in that. "You'll take half, and let me keep the rest?"

"I'll take five," said he, "and let you pass, so you can give the countersign."

I had hoped he had forgotten that; and at the word I let the napkin with my money tied in it fall upon my lap, and held up my hands as one struck dumb. And faith, I found little difficulty in feigning dismay, either.

"Look you there, now!" said I: "with your questioning, you've driven it clean out of my head. And now you'll have to help me to recall it. Let me see; 'twas a name, wasn't it?"

I kept mine eye on my man's face as I spoke, and I saw that my first guess had hit the mark.

"What sort of name?" said he.

"Dear, dear!" said I. "To think I should have let it slip out of my mind, now! 'Twas—I think 'twas one of the names of the captains—wasn't it, now?"

But this I put forth with a little hesitation, for I was venturing on ground that might prove hollow.

"Why," says he, "I warrant he's a captain, and a fine young captain, too. Good luck go with him this night!"

"To be sure," said I. 'Tis he that's to lead the assault on Derry this night—now, isn't it?"

"What!" says he—what's that you say? Who told you that?"

"Aha!" said I. "You see, I am one that hath friends in the camp. You'd better treat me with civility. My Lord Clancarty," said I. "There's your password."

"Clancarty it is, sure enough," quoth he. "And since you know that, and have a pass in your hand, faith! I'll even let you pass, when you've handed over the money."

"Take four shillings, then," said I, "and leave me three."

"Why, so I will," says he, "if you'll throw a kiss into the bargain."

"Nay, truly," I said, "I'd rather give you the five—but you'll never be so hard on me!"

"Five shillings," says he, "or four and a kiss; it's my last word."

"Take the five, then," said I, and held them out to him.

He took them and put them into his pocket.

"And now," quoth he, "I shall have the kiss as well ;" and therewith made a catch at the boat.

But I was too nimble for him, being by great good fortune in the very act of pushing off from the bank ; and he, missing the edge of the boat by a hair's-breadth, went floundering into the water, heels over head. And the last I saw of this would-be gallant, as I floated away from him, he was scrambling up the bank again in a mighty disconsolate fashion, dripping from every stitch he wore. As to the five shillings he had come by in so dishonest a manner, I make little doubt he left them at the bottom of the river.

For mine own part, all went as well with me as heart could wish. Twice more I was stopped before the darkness increased so as to hide the boat ; but each time the knowledge I had gained did me yeoman's service. As neither of the sentries was able to read, I even made bold to give Richard Hamilton's name, instead of Patrick Sarsfield's, and to append my Lord Louth's thereto. And that and the countersign got me past without trouble or question.

Night was fallen as dark as pitch by the time I reached the Ferry landing-stage. There I thought myself altogether safe, and so took time to moor my boat before I left her, for, truly, a boat was too precious a thing to us to be left in any jeopardy. And then I took my way along the lane most confidently. I marvel indeed that I broke not into a snatch of a song ; weariness, I suppose, prevented me. And I here record my gratitude to that same friendly pain ; for, as it was, I did all but betray myself to a party of men that were drawn up in the Ferry lane. I was so close to them when I stopped that I could hear them whispering softly one to another.

"I'll be sworn I heard a footstep," said one, in a very low voice. "Will it be the Captain, do you think ?"

"Hardly," said his comrade, as cautiously. "'Tis but a short time since we heard the changing of the guard there above, at the gate ; and that, thou knowest, was at half-past nine."

So, then, I was still in time, could I but make my way past this ambuscade ; and that I thought very possible. That morning's adventure had shown me that a hedge gives shelter at both sides, and now I put that piece of knowledge into practice. Very

gingerly I retraced my steps until I found a gap—the hedge now was full of them, since some of the bushes had been pulled up in the early part of the siege for fuel, before the enemy catered for us in that article by means of their bombs. Through that I crept, trusting to find another at the top of the bank, which, with a little groping, I did. And a minute after that I was knocking upon the sally-port at Newgate, in some trepidation lest the ambuscaders should come up behind me, and take me, before the watch thought fit to open to me.

But they did not; and though he that opened to my knocking at first demurred to my request for admission, yet he fetched up the officer of the guard to me; and he, I promise you, no sooner heard the first words of my story than he had me into the city as quick as I could desire. 'Twas then but ten minutes from ten of the clock, and yet, so smart were our men about their preparations, notwithstanding their weakness, that they were ready for their assailants, and beat them off with great ease.

I know not that any of them were killed, the darkness proving their shield; but Captain O'Neill, coming through into Mr. MacKee's cellar, was taken prisoner, with half a dozen of his men; and that was the end of his mine. As to my Lord Clancarty, he fared scarce so well as upon his former endeavour; for this time he made not up so near to the gate as to knock thereat. But our victory was worth two boats to us; for going down to secure mine, the men that were sent took another little one and a great one, that, I suppose, had fetched across the river the party of men I so nearly fell into the hands of on my way up to Newgate through the Ferry lane.

CHAPTER XLIV.

WHAT BECAME OF THE STRAWBERRIES.

HE that hath never ventured greatly and succeeded, how chief a blessedness of life hath he missed! As I waited at my father's door for entrance, methought the buoyant peace which enwrapt me was a kind of foretaste of heaven; for not alone had I accomplished the thing I had set out to do, but God, in His infinite mercy, had made use of my weakness to do another thing whereof I had never dreamed, and that a service to the cause scarce less important than the first.

My welcome was of a piece with my joy. When Margery, opening the door to me, cast her arms about me and rejoiced over me like a mother over her child that hath been lost and is found; when Rosa ran to me, with great eyes full of a joy that was a veil to hide her wanness, and her trembling hot hands that sought my neck; when my father took me in his arms and bade God bless me before ever he heard how I had sped; 'twas over-payment for ten such days as I had passed. Even now, as I recall it to set it down, the thought of it doth bring back into mine eyes the feeling of the dewy moisture which came to them then, as sweet and as refreshing as dew upon parched flowers in time of drought.

Ay, and there was more to come; for, bending over the children's cots, my gaze awoke first one child and then the other; and, oh, the joy to see me! James was as glad as Roland, and neither could satisfy himself with hugging me. Then came the merriest junketing that heart could wish. We set the children up in bed and fed them with a little of the ripest of the fruit I had brought in—six berries to each, for Margery would allow no more—and a little morsel of the fair white bread that I resolved should be kept for

them alone. Margery shook her head at us, as a wise nurse that objected on principle to such midnight revelling; but as for me, in watching their pleasure I clean forgot the siege, with its privations and pains, and tasted some of the purest happiness that ever I knew in my life.

Strange, that after this my dreams should be anything but rosy, being all of my husband chained in hunger and darkness in his prison-cell; and near him there was always laid a bleeding corpse, the face of which I could never see, but the contours of the form were like those of my brother Wamphray's. I woke from that dream shuddering as I had shuddered the day before when he that was leading me prisoner fell back with a groan and died at my feet.

Golden pieces had been scarce so precious as my strawberries at such a time, and Rabbie had given me more than could by any care be kept fit for the children's eating, at the sparing rate it was judged wise to observe. The rest I promised myself the delight of sharing among the elder folk when we should be gathered together at dinner-time. Our commons now were of the scantiest and coarsest; but the bowl of ruddy fruit in the middle of the table transformed our miserable meal into a feast. None of us had ever before seen such strawberries, so great and so well coloured; in the days of our abundance they had been a luxury worth special notice. Judge, therefore, what they now were, when the most ordinary necessities of life were transformed by dearth into special luxuries.

As I parted them into shares, forgetting no one, there returned upon me that sorry animal appetite that had angered me at myself once or twice the day before, so that my mouth began to water, as the saying is, at the thought of their flavour and freshness. Partly to thwart this littleness, and partly, I believe, because I was a miser of my pleasures, and would fain enjoy them one by one—first the pleasure of witnessing their enjoyment of their portions, and after that mine own enjoyment of mine—I did not at once begin to eat my share of the fruit; and while I delayed, who should enter to us but Mr. Jedediah Hewson.

None of us, I think, had taken note until that moment of his absence from his usual place. Now, before we were aware, he stood among us—he hungry, we appeased. He would fain—I marked it—have thrust back every sign of appetite; and in truth, I believe that he succeeded to every eye but mine own. But to

feel a thing one's self doth make one very keen to detect the same in another ; and I marked, because I had just checked, the involuntary motion of the lips and throat, as though he swallowed somewhat. He lifted his eyes ; they met mine, that were fixed full upon him. And in that instant of time, many things concerning Mr. Hewson were plain to me that until then I had never divined.

"Here is your share, sir," said I. And I gave him my plate as I spoke. I say not that under the circumstances it cost me naught ; though sure it was as trifling a service as could be done by one human being for another. But small as it was, 'twas enough to complete the opening of mine eyes to the better side of Mr. Hewson.

He hath a trick of affecting rustic manners at table, as one that contemns trifling observances. It hath often annoyed me, but on this day I scarce could mark it. Next I fell to wondering at this ; 'twas as if I could suddenly make allowance for him ; and I knew not why. For things were between us exactly as they had ever been : he had no love for me, nor I for him ; he had never shown me any friendship—save once, I thought, with a quick flash of recollection. For on the day of the riot he had understood me as none else had done ; he had defended me from my father's anger ; and I, I remembered with shame, had never thanked him for it. It was true that I had hardly seen him since ; but then, a duty delayed is not a duty discharged, and so I spoke to him across the table.

"Sir," said I, "I was hindered by my swoon from thanking you, three days ago, for the kindness you showed me, the apprehension you had of my conduct ; permit me now to repair my negligence and to express my gratitude."

He lifted his eyes to mine, dallying the while with his fruit.

"I did no more than my duty to you, and to myself, and to others," said he ; and he spoke not near so gently as I somehow had expected that he should. "Justice—I did but recall it to the mind of one whom passion had blinded for the moment ; how doth that merit your gratitude ? And it follows not—remember that—that in other matters I approve of your conduct, or of your spirit, because I once pronounced that you had acted not amiss."

Surly as ever was Mr. Hewson, and yet I was not angry. On the contrary, that which had dawned upon me before now stood clear before my mind—to wit, that his harshness was a part of

his faithfulness to that which he held for truth, part of his loyalty to that which he took for duty. Truth half seen, and duty partially conceived, as I thought them, certainly he was devoted to them after an unswerving fashion. But why had the veil now dropped from mine eyes that had blinded them so long?

Upon a sudden I bethought me that he had been absent from the house the night before—ay, and the night before that, too—the night following that whereon we had been robbed. Since the very hour of the riot, it should seem, he had begun to withdraw himself from our company, in especial at meal-times. Why was this? I determined to ask him.

"Mr. Hewson," said I, "why have you been so little in the house since the day of the riot? We have been wondering at your absence."

He looked up and coloured; my father looked up, too, and spoke:

"Why, girl," said he, "there's little need to ask that, I think. Master Hewson hath left us, and very properly, too, say I"—but I thought his voice a little altered as he said it—"for some others that can entertain him more according to his reverence."

"Nay, sir," said I, preventing Mr. Hewson's reply, "his hands and his face tell another story, if you will but look at them."

"Indeed, Mrs. Hamilton," said the old man something proudly, "thy father is right. And I have found me entertainment more fit for my deserts, which are naught."

At this it was my father's turn to colour.

"I ask your pardon, sir," said he. "I was wrong to speak as I did, and should have known you better."

"Think no more of it, sir," returned the other.

"And hast thou really quitted the house lest we should feel thy presence burdensome, Mr. Hewson?" said my father, with contrition. "'Twas handsomely done of thee, and even far too handsome for my liking, between ancient friends, as we are. But is it truly so?"

"There's little grace in forcing the confession," said Mr. Hewson, on his high horse again in a moment.

"Nay, man, why so tifty?" said Mr. Murray. "I was about to say that, having held together so long, we will hold together now till the end, an it please you. I like not changes; and one

more or less, what doth it matter? Moreover, our diminished store may well prove like that of the Sidonian widow, after the prophet became her lodger, if it be often replenished, as you see it to-day, through God's bounty and my daughter's courage."

"And herewith, Mr. Hewson," said I, willing to put that matter aside, "we do entreat your company at supper—such as it may be."

"Mary," said Rosa quickly, "where's your plate?"

I checked her with a gesture; but Mr. Hewson was quick, and had understood her question.

"Let me understand," said he, in his authoritative manner, as of one that questioned a suspect. "Was it your own share, Mistress Mary, that you bestowed on me?"

"If they were, sir, what then?" said I, feeling on a sudden how small a thing it was. "Credit me," I said, and it was true, "I enjoyed them more by far than if I had eaten them."

And as I said this, I knew that it was because I had denied myself—a very little thing!—for his sake, that now I was in charity with Master Hewson after a sort that I had never been before.

"You enjoyed them more nobly, you would say," returned he. "'Tis strange, for we have never had much friendship one for the other. Were I but sure, now, that you are a regenerate woman!"

"You would thank me, no doubt," said I, unable to forbear a smile.

"Nay, that I do now, most heartily," said he. "But it is my duty to tell you, madam, that unregenerate virtues are no better than golden vices—ay, and the more pernicious for their glitter. And she that is a vessel of wrath, were she adorned with every virtue and every grace that earth hath ever seen, is but a gracious devil beneath them all."

Could he but have seen, as I saw, the storm he had raised in one mind, at least, of his auditors! Rosa's eyes flashed so that it verily seemed as though the lamb were about to come to blows with the sheep-dog. My father, too, though he did not say a word, seemed both astonished and displeased. But to me anger was impossible, because I understood. At last I saw through the man's bearish harshness, and knew that it was but as a rough husk to a noble kernel. And it was not the injustice wherewith he judged me that I saw in his words, so much as the joy, great

and glorious as that of the angels of God, wherewith he would welcome me, if by any means he could prevail upon me to accept his doctrines so far as to give him hope of my salvation.

"We may understand each other better by-and-by, sir," said I. "Until then I will try to pardon that which is over-blunt in your language towards me, in consideration of its well-meaning."

Never since then have I fallen back to the contempt and dislike that I formerly entertained for Mr. Hewson. And I have often wondered that the little tiny kindness I did him should have removed a sort of scales from mine eyes that had blinded me to much of his real worth.

Yet so it was; and when I think that it is so, another question springs up in my mind. I wonder if 'tis less because of His loving-kindness toward us that God doth bestow His bounty upon us, making His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the very worst of us, than because of His bounty that He is able to look upon us with any kindness. How, but out of His almighty beneficence, could Almighty Goodness endure the like of us, crammed as we are with every kind of littleness and fault? 'Tis sure His care of us that is the root whereon doth flourish the blossom of His love.

CHAPTER XLV.

GATHERING GLOOM.

EVEN at that moment, had we but known it, the feet of those that brought us sorrow were on the threshold. Before we rose from table there came a man desiring speech of my father. His errand was to ask Mr. Murray to go to Governor Walker, who awaited him at Bishop's Gate. A little wondering, he rose and followed the messenger out of the house, Mr. Hewson bearing him company.

Not a single thought had we of any ill tidings, and it was something else that took us, a few minutes later, to the doorway. Looking forth from it, we saw, turning into the street, one of those companies that by this time we knew so well—eight men bearing trestles, and on the trestles somewhat that lay still.

"Who can it be?" Rosa whispered to me.

"Not Mr. Walker, God be praised!" said I (for the party was coming in the direction of his house, which was two doors from our own). "It was he, you know, that sent for my father to come to him."

Even as I said the words, Mr. Walker came into the street; my father walked beside him, and Mr. Hewson a little behind. Mr. Murray walked as firmly as ever I saw him, accepting no help, nor seeming to need any. He held his head high, and there was a sort of haughtiness in his mien that was new in him; it was not like the carriage of a man heart-broken. For all that, the first glimpse of him told us the whole tale. We needed no longer to ask who it was that lay on the bier; we knew. We stood aside to make way for the bearers before ever they came near us; and it was to our door, sure enough, that they brought their burden,

on our threshold that they laid it down. We needed not to ask, either, whether it was a wound, or worse ; that which lay on the bier told its own story, though it was all covered with a great standard. This was death. Rosa, my dove-like Rosa, was widowed, and my father bereaved of the son that should have been the stay of his age.

The silken folds of the standard lay richly over the doorsill as they laid him down, and rustled against our feet. Rosa drew back with a low cry. I stooped down—I knew not why—and stroked the golden fringe as though I loved it ; then I laid it in glittering loops upon the poor dead body, above the silk that covered it already.

Mr. Walker made as though he would have said somewhat. The man hath a kindly heart, let them say of him what they please ; and it was nothing else than the desire he had to speak comfortable words to us that bereft him of the power to speak any words at all. But Rosa could speak, and did, and that with a gentle dignity and power that astonished me.

"We know what you would say, sir, and we thank you," said she. "Ours is in truth a sore loss, but there's scarce a family in Derry that hath not suffered the like. I for one have been prepared for it this long time—ay, ever since the first day of these troubles—and I desire to bear my share in them as—as I should."

Her voice broke and changed at every second word, but yet it was perfectly clear and distinct ; her tears dropped hot, while she spoke, upon my hands that trifled with my brother's gaudy glorious pall. But through them she looked straight and steadily into Mr. Walker's face, about whom there went many a traitorous rumour through the town in those days, that I do believe were as false as lying itself.

"I have some right now," said she, "to say to you that have the charge of us : see that we be not defrauded of that for which we have paid so dear."

"So far as in me lies," quoth Mr. Walker earnestly, "I do promise it." And he spoke to Rosa as to one that had a right to require the pledge he gave ; then, bending down, he lifted a fold of the great flag that covered Wamphray's body, guiding our eyes thereto. "Let it be his shroud," said he. "But for him, and for his cousin that lies as low as he, it might be waving over Derry by this time."

"What !" we cried aghast ; "is Adam dead as well ?"

"Not dead," said Mr. Walker, "but wounded almost to death. This is the sorest morning's work for the town that has happened yet."

After he had left us, Mr. Murray went to the room where by this time the weeping women were doing the last offices to his son. Mr. Hewson made as if he would have accompanied him.

"I pray you of your friendship, sir," said my father to him, "to leave me to myself for some short space of time."

Mr. Hewson scanned his face with something of suspicion.

"I trust, sir," said he, "that you are not harbouring rebellion against the decrees of the All-wise?"

"I trust not, sir," said Mr. Murray. "But I shall be better able to tell you when I have settled it with mine own soul." And so went in and sat alone with his dead, trying it.

I dared not intrude either upon him or upon Rosa, whose face shone through her grief like the prophet's when he came down from the mount; it struck me with a kind of awe that made me understand why the Israelites could no longer bear to look upon him. And so I thought I would go tend the children, since to sit idly down to grieve was nothing at all to the purpose. As yet, though I had seen and handled Wamphray's body, I had no real comprehension of his death. There is, sure, a stunning of the mind as well as of the body, wherein, though we know we are struck, we have no feeling of the blow.

No sooner did I set foot in the nursery than the children (knowing nothing, poor lambs! of what had happened) ran to me asking for more strawberries, and at the word the whole meaning of our loss came sharply and suddenly upon me; the tingling of the blow made itself felt. Strawberries! I minded me of those we had set apart for him scarce an hour before, and at the thought my heart was like to break for him.

Strange, that so small a matter should have power to pierce the heart and to open the floodgates of the eyes! Life and love, goods and gear, a career that promised to be a great one—all these had been in my brother's hand, and of all these the blow that slew him had bereft him. And yet I protest the thought of so many and great losses touched me not half so piercingly as that of a little enjoyment that he had missed, after much privation to make it sweet.

It was at his funeral that Dr. Aicken told me he had hopes of Adam's life; Rosa heard him say it, and looked from one of us

to the other with a light of gladness on her face that was near as great a miracle, I thought, as though her dead had risen from the grave where she had just laid him. The woman sat so loose to earth that she could take thought for any of us before herself.

"Why, Mary," said she to me, as we came into the house, "I shall be nothing near so long parted from him as you from James already." And that this was true none that looked at her face could doubt. "And," said she, "take heart, Mary, and hope for the best, for I am sure—as sure as though I saw it—that James will come back to you safe and sound. As I cast the dust upon Wamphray's coffin" ('twas she herself, indeed, that had sprinkled the first handful) "I thought of you, and I suddenly felt sure of it."

And later in the day, when we had been together to see the children abed, she desired that I would promise her one thing.

"It is," said she, "that you will be a mother to my son when I am gone."

Alas! though I promised with all my heart at the time, 'twas but a very few days after that we had reason all too powerful to fear that neither her child nor my own should stand much longer in need of a mother's care. For the languor that had oppressed them so long began to pass into active illness on the day following Wamphray's funeral, and two days after that the doctor pronounced their sickness to be the same pestilence that had ravaged the town—a kind of prison fever from which few that were struck down with it ever arose.

CHAPTER XLVI.

TELLS HOW MRS. HAMILTON ATTENDED A MEETING OF COUNCIL.

ALL this time no news had come in from the fleet, neither by my messenger nor by any other, so that we were yet in doubt whether Kirke was aware of our extremity. 'Twas true that we had a hope of it that it was unknown to most of the other townsfolk; but I know not whether we were not therefore the more to be pitied, since it did but add keenness to the suspense, that was already all too keen. 'Twas a hope as full of pains and fears as any briar of thorns; he that hath a briar to his staff, is he better off than he that hath no staff at all? I doubt it. When the burden of grief and anxiety about the children was added to our other burdens, they made together a load that bade fair to become altogether insupportable.

That any other mother should ever be so hard bestead as we were then, is sure a thing to hope against and to pray against alike. Our children were sick of a fever, whereof the cure should be nourishing and suitable diet, milk in particular. Now, if we had been willing to pay our heart's blood for milk, there was not a drop of it to be bought at the price. The one thing we had that was wholesome food was a little oatmeal, and that, the doctor told us, was not suitable to their illness. Suitable or not, 'twas the best we had to give them; they had the gruel from it, and the lees were the best of our own food, helped out by such things as could be bought for money in the town, which now were of the last degree of nauseousness. And after a few days there was so little left of the meal, that we would no longer eat any of it, but kept it all for the children, and even so it dwindled at a heart-breaking rate.

Every day my father and Mr. Hewson came both of them to the nursery to ask for the children. So at first did Mrs. Browning; but we besought her to come no more, lest the sickness should prove catching, and so be carried to her own grandchild, and to Thomas Ash's infant daughters, who as yet were well, all three. We never failed to ask, when any came to us, whether there was no news yet from the fleet. Alas! the answer was still No, and No; till I began to fear that Gorman must have come by some mishap, since I knew him wholly incapable of playing the traitor.

But one morning Mr. Hewson came to us a second time (which till then he had never done), and with a step so brisk and a face so glowing, that of themselves they were enough to proclaim good news.

"Mrs. Hamilton," said he, "will you be pleased to come at once to the council-chamber? Your presence is required there, and I am sent to fetch you."

"But why?" said I, willing to excuse myself, for I had no mind to leave my child.

"The Governors desire it," quoth he. "I heard it said that you had saved the town, you and the Irish lad betwixt you. Your messenger is to hand; but, I think, without his credentials; and you are required, no doubt, to speak to his identity."

I had as little mind to go as ever I had to anything in my life, and was astonished myself thereat. But here was no room to deny my presence, so I was even fain to do as was desired of me.

I had no sooner come within the council-chamber, however, and made my curtesy to the Governors, than I was glad I came. 'Tis true that my knees knocked together where I stood, but that was mere weakness, not bashfulness. It was so like a dream to me for a moment, that I missed the first question which was put to me by Mr. Walker. 'Twas the sharp voice of Gorman, answering instead of me, that recalled me to myself.

"To be sure, she's Mrs. Hamilton of Cloncall," said he. "'Tis meself that thought you had some acquaintance with her before this."

There were some of Mr. Walker's counsellors that could not forbear a smile at this, for his love of the proper forms and ceremonies of a council hath given offence to some that would have the grain without the husk—the business without the formalities. Their smile and Gorman's disrespect were like to have angered Mr. Walker, for he drew down his brows with some asperity.

But I made haste to interpose my word, begging his pardon for the inattention that had caused me to miss the question he had put.

"And as to the lad," I continued, "I am sure he meant no disrespect, sir; and knowledge of the forms of such a court as this is scarce to be looked for from such as he."

"Humph!" quoth Mr. Walker, "nor aught from a sow but a grumph, to be sure. And that's true enough, Mrs. Hamilton, and so I will say no more about it. So perhaps you will now tell us whether the lad was really the bearer of a message from you to Major-General Kirke; and if so, how you came by speech of him, as well as what the message was; and everything, in a word, that bears upon the matter."

With that, Colonel Mitchelburne bade place a chair for me. He was wise, poor man, in all the signs of weakness, having newly buried his own lady, as well as I know not how many pretty babes, that the siege was the death of. I know not to this day whether I thanked him for his courtesy, for my eagerness came to a height, and carried me away with it.

"Sir," I said to Mr. Walker, "I'll tell you anything and everything you desire to hear from me, and that with a deal of pleasure, if I may but have one thing told first to me."

"And what is that, Mrs. Hamilton?" said he.

"'Tis how my messenger sped with my message," said I. "In faith, sir, I believe I scarce could tell you a connected story until I be satisfied of that."

Mr. Walker looked not best pleased, but yet he gave me to understand that I had leave to put what questions I pleased to the lad. No doubt he thought we were a pair, for our ignorance of the form to be observed in the official presence of high dignitaries such as himself.

"Now, Gorman," said I, "don't wait for questions, but begin at the beginning, and tell us the whole story."

"Faith, my lady, and I will that," said he, briakly. "Though, to be sure, 'twill all go into a nutshell. Sure, there wasn't the *laste* bit of difficulty in life in getting to Inch for the likes of Gorman, nor yet of coming to speech of the Major-General—none at all. Oh! and never was a gentleman more interested nor more consarned for you. Sure, 'twas the next minute he desired to be out of Lough Swilly, and off to Lough Foyle."

"Now, God be praised for that!" murmured Mr. Walker, in a very low voice.

But Gorman heard the words, and turned towards him.

"So you would have said, sir, to hear him talk," said he, speaking every word separate and slowly, like taps upon a drum. "But 'tis *here* he ought to be, by this time, if he meant it," he continued, bringing the words out all in one mouthful, as it were. "For that's a week ago. Ah, sir, it's mighty hard difficulties that lie in the way when the will's wanting."

At that Colonel Mitchelburne broke in, in his strong, deliberate fashion.

"Boy," said he, "take care of your tongue! Is it that Kirke hath no mind to relieve the city you would have us believe? That, I think, can scarce be the case."

"And if not," quoth Mr. Walker, with great sharpness, "'tis a most injurious meaning to put upon delays that doubtless he's as sorry for as ourselves."

I half feared that Gorman would be daunted by so much heat. Sure, 'twas little I knew him.

"Judge for yourselves, thin," said he, very coolly. "The General described to me—for all so simple as I stand before you—the desire he had to come to you by the same way I went to him."

"What! across the country?" said Colonel Mitchelburne.

"How else?" returned Gorman. "'But,' says he to me, 'there's Fitzgerald, and Nugent, and Hamilton himself, betwixt Derry and me, and the Duke of Berwick behind us; and 'tis beyond me, so it is.' 'Dear your Excellency,' said I, 'tis none beyond the men of Derry to give them a beatin', *anny* how!' And with that it's to fall to I did, and tell him how you've done it *time and again*. 'Fall on them from this side, General,' says I, 'and let the Derry men fall on them from the other, and it's under your knee you'll have them,' says I. 'Appoint your time, an' let me take them notice of it, and 'tis ready an' willing they'll be, niver you fear. And if you don't sleep in Derry the same night,' says I, 'my name's not Gorman O'Cahan!'"

"Well planned, ensign!" says Colonel Mitchelburne, laughing. "And what said his Excellency to that?"

"Made a jest of it, just like your 'anner," returned Gorman, a little bitterly. "Now I ax you yourself, sir, was that like a man in earnest?"

"It was not *like* a man in earnest," quoth the Colonel, gravely. "But, for all that, we must not lightly think evil of the General."

Doubtless he hath information that we lack, and doubtless he hath reason good enough for his conduct, which he'll be ready to give us when he hath made his way to us at last."

But, in spite of his words, 'twas plain to be seen that he assumed more confidence than he felt; and his face, when he thought himself unnoticed, was the face of a man that hath received a blow.

"Then bad's the best of your news, Gorman, according to your reading of it?" said I to the lad, as no one else spoke.

"Not altogether, me lady," said he, brightening up. "For wan thing, I heard news of a ship belonging to this place that's expected back daily, with orders from the King himself."

"What ship's that?" asked Mr. Walker, quickly.

"It's meself that doesn't know her name, your 'anner," said Gorman. "But at the first, when Kirke came into the Lough six weeks ago, you know, that ship was in the fleet; and 'twas in a mortal taking her captain was—so they told me—when 'twas to quit the river they made up their minds to do. 'Twas so bitter angry he grew at the turning away, that he refused to dally back and forth, like the rest; and they said he sailed off at wance to England, to give the King news of it, and get his mind on the matter."

"I would stake a round sum," I said, "that I know both the name of the ship and of her captain." And I quivered from head to foot as I said it.

"I, too," said Mitchelburne—"or, at least, I'd say so, if it was a ship of war he commanded, instead of a merchantman."

"Ah, but, your 'anner," said Gorman, "'twas a victualler this ship was, accordin' to what I heard."

"Then it was Captain Browning," said the Colonel. "And Kirke will presently have orders he can't disregard, if Browning went for them."

"If they do but come in time for us," quoth Mr. Walker.

"As to that, too," said Gorman, quickly, "'tis meself has something to tell you, that you'll maybe be glad to hear. Wasn't I tellin' your 'anners, whin the lady was sent for, what it was that kept me so long on me irrاند? Sure, 'twas a prisoner I was made; and a mortal hard bite that same accident made me ait, too."

"How was that?" I asked him.

"Indade, thin, lady darlint, 'twas a terrible close searching they

were after givin' me the last time I was in their hands," quoth he. "But divvle a thing did they find, for all the trouble they took, for the letter was too well hidden for them. But this time 'twas in a hurry I was to be off, and in a hurry they were to dismiss me; an' I could feel it meself, in the band of me breeches. 'Well,' says I to meself, 'av it's no traces at all, at all, they can find upon you ov dealin's with the city, it's after lettin' you off they'll be, no doubt.' So findin' meself left alone for a few minutes, before they took me in front of the Marshal, as they call him, I ripped it out unbeknownst like, and ate it up."

"Well done, Gorman!" said I.

Indeed, 'twere impossible to lay hands on a better messenger, or a more faithful, than this lad.

"But 'twas a prisoner they made me, and a prisoner they kept me, in spite of me trouble," quoth he. "Nivver till this mornin' did I see the hair of a chance to give thim the slip; an' a plaguey hungry time it was I had of it, I can tell you, an' that's what I started to tell you, when I began. It's starved with hunger and dyin' with pestilence, you think you are, here inside the walls; but, faith, it's not much better they are outside, the comfortless creatures! It's to eat the sods out of the peat-stack they're ready to do, for the very hunger; and as to sickness, there's scarce a sound man among the lot that I could see. 'Tisn't fresh men you'll have to match yourselves against, whin it comes to fightin'; an' if you can but hold out a week or two longer, it's to raise the siege they'll have to do. An' troth, it's glad men they'd be, the most of thim, to hear the order—all but the Marshal, that turns his back on one and all of thim, and swears to himself in Rooshian."

Our Governors looked at each other, and then they looked at me.

"Hold out a week or two!" said Colonel Mitchelburne. "I wonder——"

"Then ye may save yourself the trouble," quoth Mr. Walket tartly. "It hath come to this: the townsfolk must be put on oath about their victual; we must see, since we have this intelligence, what can be mustered up. Two days' subsistence—we shall leave so much—or three, perhaps, to each family. The rest must be put in the common stock; and after that——" He looked at me. "How much could you contribute, Mrs. Hamilton," quoth he, "if we did it to-day?"

"How much?" said I, and my voice, in spite of myself, was

full of bitterness. "I fear, sir, that we have scarce the two or three days' subsistence that you speak of. We go about now buying—what our neighbours buy."

"Rats and mice, and offal scarce fit for a dog!" quoth he. "I know what it is, and am most sorry to think you are brought to such living, for certainly you were most generous with your goods while you had them. Well, 'tis certain that what I say must be done; for do ye know what kind of trash the garrison is forced to eat?"

"Truly do I," I replied. "I have eaten a siege-pancake myself this very day, and found it none so terribly unsavoury, after all."

"Hunger," quoth he, "is a marvellous sauce. But have you tried salted hides yet? As sure as I sit in this chair, that's all I have left to give out for rations. Toothsome fare, is it not, for the sick especially? God send us succour speedily!" quoth he.

"Amen!" said I.

And "Amen" said all the rest.

"There's Counsellor Ragston," quoth he, trying to make as though he jested, but both his voice and his eyes belied him—"do you know why he's not with the rest of us to-day? He keeps his chamber because he hath a little more flesh left on his bones than most of us; and he declares that every man he meets eyes him so hungrily that he goes in peril of his life."

"And for my part," quoth one of the aldermen, "I had rather we fell to eating one another than to surrender while there's the smallest hope of relief."

"Mind, Ensign O'Cahan," quoth Colonel Mitchelburne, in his commanding way, "not a word out of doors of aught you have heard in this chamber."

"True for you, sir," said Gorman, answering to his new style with a grin. "Sure, you may trust me."

"Of that," said the Colonel, "we are thoroughly assured."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE COST OF CONSTANCY.

POOR little fevered faces! poor little tossing frames! The moment I turned homeward from the council-chamber mine eyes and my heart were full of the picture, and Gorman's questions about his little gentleman did but add poignancy to the thought of their sore sickness. I hastened back to them, with the lad at my heels, for he would not be forbid to follow me.

"For who can tell," said he, "but a good romp and a good laugh with Gorman may be the savin' ov thim?"

And though the first was wholly out of question, I did find a feeble hope spring up in my mind that the last might have some good result; and so, being arrived at the house, I brought the lad up to the nursery.

Alas for the game, and alas for the laugh, he was like to have with the children! For even in the short hour—'twas little more—that I had been absent from his side, a woeful change had passed over my son. He tossed to and fro no longer, being now too weak for it; but as though the fever still tormented him, from time to time he twitched all over. His eyes were neither wholly open nor wholly shut; in them there was no kind of apprehension; neither, when I spoke to him, hoping to rouse him, did any return to them.

Rosa sat by the side of her own son's cot; he was scarce so spent as Roland, but 'twas easy to see that he was on the same rough track. Tears chased each other down her cheeks, and she made no effort to check them. Gorman, too, when he had spoken to Roland again and again without receiving any answer, or effecting any result at all, save a weary turning of the head

upon the pillow, fell into a fit of weeping, mixed with loud rasping sobs that it choked one to listen to. I fell into a sort of trembling that was become all too common with me.

"Margery," said I, "is this—death?"

"Nay, nay, madam; never give way," quoth she. "God forbid that it be aught worse than the natural course of the fever!"

But the tones of her voice and the expression of her face did belie her words, and the next moment, when Roland, disturbed no doubt by the noise of our voices, brake forth into a babble of words that were all distraught, I could bear it no more, but sent forth in mine own despite a sharp cry that brought them all around me, each vying with the rest to find some comfortable thing to say to me. They might have tried as well to lull the winds with their comfort; the one sound in the world that had any meaning for me was the voice of my child, and the meaning of that was bitter. I cast me down on my knees beside his cot in a kind of ecstasy of grief.

"Oh, Mary," said Rosa, and she threw herself on her knees beside me, "is there anything in the world worth this?"

Faith and freedom seemed light in the balance as she put the question;—how should they repay a mother for the sacrifice of her child? I asked of mine own mind what I would do that day if the keys of the city were in my hands. And, looking up, I saw the shadows of both questions—hers and mine—in Gorman's eyes.

Therewith it was borne in upon my mind that the matter was in a sort within my choice. This boy, that now had carried messages three times through the enemy's lines—this boy, that an hour before had been ear-witness of the confession of our extremity—what might he not do should he think it a service to Roland and to me?

The thought struck me like a blow at first, and after that it steadied me like a draught of wine.

"If there were any pain to bear, that would ease him," said I. "If it were my life for his— But that's nothing. If it were even to continue in this misery——" At that I choked and stopped, for in truth there was not the thing I could have counted a sacrifice, so it did but purchase life and health for my child. "But oh, Rosa," I said, when I found my voice again, "are we the only mothers in Derry that have children at the

point of death? How many, do you think, have parted with theirs already? What right have we to hinder them of their requital if a wish would do it? Nay, what was that that you said yourself so gallantly to Mr. Walker when Wamphray lay dead at your feet?"

She made no answer to that, nor did she speak a word for a minute or two. Then she said:

"Your voice is still for 'No surrender,' then, whatever the cost may be?"

"Both now and till the moment of victory," said I.

But my voice faltered as I said it, for I thought that I was speaking Roland's doom. And yet, what praise is there in constancy where there is nothing to endure?

What constancy we had it in us to show, now was the moment to call it forth. For now began the main struggle of the siege—to Rosa and to me. And though it lasted scarce four days, to set against well-nigh four months, yet even now it seems to me no unequal division to count the days the one half, and the months the other.

Not the least part of our suffering was the knowledge that we could do so little, scarce anything at all. And it was no small addition to it that our good friend Dr. Aicken was so angered by our obstinacy, that he would come no more to see us. And yet, how could we be but obstinate? When he brought in Master Shennan, the surgeon-barber, with his basin and lancets, the children were fallen too weak to be tormented, and so we told him.

"What!" said he, "the fever hath them in his clutches, and yet you will deny them the single chance of life that remains to be tried!"

"Will it save them, sir?" asked Rosa, piteously.

"We can but try it," he returned; and his hesitation gave us all the answer we needed.

"Then," said she, "I will not have my child tormented to no purpose."

"No, nor I neither," said I.

To that we stuck, spite of all he could say to us; and afterwards he came but seldom to see them.

"What use," said he, "since their mothers will not give me leave to do them any good? Certes, my hands are far too full to leave me time to spend on those I can be of no use to!"

Margery and Annot tormented us from time to time, beseeching us to be ruled, and to take some rest. How could we, since the moment we turned our eyes from the faces of our children, we were forced to turn them back again, lest even in that moment there might have been some change? Both my father and Mr. Hewson came to us constantly, and we did not fail to value their kindness as it deserved. But, alas! that, too, was mixed with distraction, since they presently began to urge us to appear, as we had always been wont, at the evening exercise.

"To what purpose, sir?" I asked of Mr. Murray, when he first proposed it. "Do you think that we could give our minds to the consideration of points of doctrine with our ears upon the stretch for a sound from the nursery?"

"Is it at the moment when the Almighty hath laid His stripes upon you that you cease to cry to Him for mercy?" asked he.

"Nay; but do we ever stop it, day or night?" I replied. "Must we fall upon our knees for the purpose, do you think?—or will He turn a deaf ear to us if our petition be not made in the presence of all the family?"

"It is the worship that is His due that you would withhold," quoth he.

"Ah, sir!" said Rosa, "will there not be time for that when the issue of this sickness hath declared itself, one way or the other?"

With that she began to weep, and he ceased to urge it. But again and again, near every time they came to us, did he and Mr. Hewson revert to the proposal. And on the Friday evening Mr. Murray sent to us, positively requiring the presence of one of us below stairs at the exercise. I went, but found it so impossible to compel my mind to devotion, save when it became in some sort a petition for mercy, that I felt it a mockery to be there. So I told my father, and besought him not to require it of me another time.

"Nay," said he, "it will be Rosa's turn to-morrow, and see that you say nothing to her that can turn her against it."

Neither he nor I knew how sore a time should be to pass between that evening and the next.

In the gray of the morning Rosa slipped all of a sudden to the floor in a death-like swoon, from which we had much ado to rouse her. Being recovered, and we urging her to take some rest, she

did but smile at us, with the old question, "How can I?" And after that she did so falter in her steps that Margery bade place a table beside her chair, whereon were set ready to her hand, not, alas! all she needed for her child, but all she had to give him. By this time that was nothing more than water and a little gruel, which last had been brought to us fresh made twice a day. And about the hour of sunrise we finished that which had been made for us the day before.

Soon after that, Margery brought in the jug of fresh water from St. Columb's Well. As she set it down, I saw that she shunned to meet mine eye, and a little languid wonder thereat glanced across my mind. At first I thought she was displeased because her advice had been slighted when she would have had Rosa lie down for an hour or two, and Rosa would not. "But why," I asked myself, "doth she visit that on me? Was not I as desirous as she that my sister should take some rest? And was not my counsel slighted as well as hers?"

With that I strove to put the question out of my head as a thing of no importance, one way or the other. But as she still avoided mine eye, it was not in my power to dismiss it so lightly. Faithful servant as she hath always been, Margery was now far more, since such privations as we had borne together do constitute a bond of very friendship; and it pained me to see her grieved. Sure, it could be no derogation to me, although I was her mistress, to explain anything in our conduct that could have given her pain. I put my hand on hers, therefore, the next time she approached me, and "Margery," said I, "if we could find it in our hearts to leave them, 'twould be in your charge."

"Sure, I know you can't," she returned with conviction. "It wouldn't be in human nature."

"Then, what hath vexed you?" I asked her. "For 'tis very plain there's something wrong."

She answered with a glance at Rosa, and a gesture that told me all.

"*Finished?*" I whispered, with despair at my heart.

"Every grain," said she. "And I fear it will be *her* death when we are forced to tell her," she added, with another stealthy glance at Rosa.

She left me, and I wondered, with a catching of the heart, whether it were better to tell Rosa then or to wait until she asked a certain question that must come ere many minutes: and in the

memory of this bitter time, when every hour brought its separate affliction, I think that these few minutes stand out as the very bitterest and most despairing of them all.

I know not how long she had been absent (but the question I dreaded had not yet been put by Rosa), when Margery opened the door with a certain quickness that spoke of hope; and in her face the same was clearly written, though mixed with an evident doubt. She beckoned to me with her hand, and very surely I needed not to be beckoned twice. I went to her at my quickest pace, and she showed me a beautiful fish, fresh from the river—a fish that weighed a pound at least, by the look of it.

"Where did you get it?" said I. "Is it—can it be—really for us?"

"Why, that," says she, faltering, "I scarce can tell. The man that brought it offered to sell it to me for a handful of meal; he said he would take nothing less. As you know, we have not a grain left; so I came for you, madam; perhaps you yourself, if you ask him——"

"I'll try," I said; and, taking the fish in my hand, I went to the street-door to see its owner.

'Twas a fish that to-day I should think dear at a farthing. On that day I took a gold piece in my hand, wondering if that would tempt him to part with it, since I had nothing at all of real value that I could offer.

The poor creature was leaning against the doorpost out of mere feebleness; and something in that attitude must have recalled him to my mind, for I knew him at once. It was the man to whom I had given the porringer of meal on the day of the riot, when our stores had been robbed. And this gave the answer to a question I was vaguely asking of myself—to wit, Why it was to our door, of all the doors in Derry, that he had brought his fish for sale?

"I remember you," I said to him.

"I wonder at it," said he.

In truth he had reason, for if he had been a ghastly creature ten days ago, ghastly was now no word for what he was. The shape of his skull showed plainly through his features, and the skin was become of so strange a colour, so dark as well as so livid, that he scarce seemed to be a human being any more.

"You will buy my fish, I hope?" he asked me eagerly.

"It depends upon yourself," said I; and I opened my hand and showed him the gold,

"Nay, madam, be merciful," said he. "Give me for it but the half of what you gave me that day out of your bounty alone, and the fish is yours."

"Not a single ounce of food have we in the house," said I, "beyond the tallow and starch that hath been bought in the market. If you'll take this for it, well." And I held out the gold towards him. "If not, I have nothing else to offer you."

"Not an ounce of food in the house," repeated the man slowly—"not an ounce? Can that be true? But you couldn't tell a lie, I know," quoth he, with a quick glance at my face. "Well, madam," he said, in a hesitating manner, "I am truly sorry for you, 'but I can't sell my fish for money. Will *money* keep the life in me?" he ended.

And as he spoke the last words, his voice rose into a kind of cry that was infinitely pitiful.

"It will purchase that which will, at least," said I.

"Are you sure of that?" asked he. "Are you sure that there's any starch or tallow left to buy?"

"I think so," I said. "I am almost sure of it, indeed; but I can't tell you, for certain. But could you not go and try? And I will promise that you shall have your fish back if there's none."

He looked at me both wistfully and compassionately.

"'Tis true that there's no one left to suffer now but myself."

"Is your child dead, then?" I asked,

"Dead? Ay, three of them," said he. "Three of them, and their mother as well. She," said he, "went first. Dead! Yes, and shovelled into the pit like dogs."

He stopped, and his grey face grew greyer at the pain he recalled.

And I had never a word to say to comfort him withal; since, if I bade him bethink himself that they were taken from their misery, were it not as much to consent that my child should be taken in like manner from his?

"But that was none of your fault," he said, continuing his train of memory. "The contrary. You did what you could, and more—far more—than I had deserved at your hands. You gave me what you could ill spare—my fault it was, too, in part, that you could spare it so ill."

"I wish that it had been enough to save the lives of your children," said I softly. "Here, take the money, and see what you can get for it."

And for the third time I held it out towards him.

But, instead of taking it, he closed my hand upon it, and held it so. 'Twas a strange liberty from a man of his degree to a woman of mine; but at that moment I did not think of it. For was he not my fellow in suffering, and by that fellowship mine equal?

"Madam," said he, "it hath grieved me often that I had any hand in robbing you. It grieves me more than ever now, when you say you are brought down as low as the poorest of us. Can you forgive me for the harm I wrought you?"

"Freely," I replied. "I have never thought of you—believe it—but as a man driven desperate by sore distress. If I knew not how to feel for it then, sure, I've learnt it by this time."

"Have you so, do you think?" said he, with a kind of bitter laughter. "I believe you think so. But *feel for it!* How could you? Can you so much as form a fancy, now, of what it's like to have your children dying—dying of nothing but hunger, lady—and to have nothing—neither bite nor sup—to put in their mouths to save their lives?"

"And isn't that mine own case this very day?" said I. "What shield have I to thrust betwixt my son and death? or what have I to give him more than you had?"

I could say no more; words failed me altogether. But, in mine own despite, a sound broke from my lips that was the match of his own strange laughter—if laughter it could be that hurt so cruelly.

He pressed my folded hand so hard upon the gold it held that I was nigh to crying out with the pain of it.

"Is it even so?" said he. "Are you brought down altogether to the same pit as the rest of us? No food, child dying? Tell me, now,"—and his voice shook with a living passion that made me tremble from head to foot—"tell me! They say you are a great lady with the Governors and the council. Why do you not move them to give up the city and save the child? Why not? There may be time yet, if you are speedy."

"Oh, how dare you!" said I, wrenching my hand out of his. "How dare you think I could do a thing so base! 'Tis little you know either of your Governors or of me, to put the question."

"What!" said he, and the keen scrutiny in his eyes was nothing abated, "are you still for 'No surrender,' madam, supposing it costs the life of your heart's dearest?"

It was as though he required a pledge of me—a pledge that I must observe to the last jot, should I make it. And who was he, to ask it? Who, but the representative of all the city's hardihood, of all the city's endurance—the very spirit of the city's faithfulness? And the frame that bodied forth that spirit seemed compact of the city's sufferings. The fiery eyes that questioned mine from their hollow caves were filled with these like the stars with light. I bent my head and answered him; as though to confirm my promise, I added thereto mine oath.

"Look you," said I: "I am but a woman, I can do nothing to help the cause; but I would not hinder it by so much as a wish. You say I have some influence with the Governors. Supposing that were true, and supposing I could turn them with a word as easily as the wind a weathercock, that word would never be 'Yield.' While there's the least hope of relief, I'd still say, 'No surrender.'"

"Then," said he, "may God do so to me, and more also, if I take a penny for my fish. I give it to you as freely as you give up your son. And may God take the will for the deed, and spare his life!"

With that he turned from the door, and would have left me without giving me time to utter a word of thanks; but I followed him and thrust the gold Jacobus into his hand.

"'Tis not for payment," I said. In truth, payment of a gift so nobly made had been a kind of profanation. "I accept your gift as freely as you make it, and thankfully, too. But, sure, you too will accept a gift that is as free as your own." For he made as though he would have thrust it back. "It will buy you that which may keep the life in you."

"Life!" said he. "Well, I've seen the day I'd have done much to preserve that same. But life is precious to us—while 'tis precious to us," said he; and thereat he laughed again, as strangely as before. "Is mine worth the saving, now?" asked he.

"Who knows but you may live to see the fruit of all these miseries?" said I. "If it be not worth saving for yourself, it is always worth saving to give away. This very moment you have perhaps saved two lives that are all the hope of two more."

And as I turned away, hope in my heart put forth one single tiny olive-leaf.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

▲ BITTER CHOICE.

IN some blind fashion, and sown by I know not what chance word or thought, hope put forth its tiny olive-shoot as I turned to leave our benefactor. But, like Jonah's gourd, it lacked both root and substance to endure the scorching of the sun, and it was withered up and gone long before nightfall. For never yet, sick as the children had been for days, had they suffered as they suffered on this Saturday.

Nothing we could do could give them lasting ease, and yet we durst not pause in our efforts to help them. Like mariners spun round and round on the verge of a whirlpool that may any moment engulf them, who may not for a moment, useless as it seems, cease from their plying of oars and trimming of sails, so were we. The frail little barques were caught in the terrible current; a second's carelessness might give it hold upon them to suck them down. And the favourable breeze that should save them was long in rising. Frail little barques indeed! and the freight of each was all the hope of his mother's heart. In our unceasing and all but hopeless task, it was little wonder if Rosa forgot both the hour of the exercise and the command she had received to be present.

We were not left long in ignorance of our fault. The daylight lingered yet in the sky when my father came into the sick-chamber, accompanied by Mr. Hewson. Both wore their sternest faces; and Mr. Hewson began to question us in his resonant voice that cannot be ignored.

It caused the children to stir uneasily, in the midst of all their distraught wandering of the wits, and both together we raised our

hands and bade him hush. Alas ! it was anger, and not caution, that we excited.

"Nay, but you shall listen to me !" quoth he, and not a whit more softly.

His manner, indeed, had a kind of insolence of authority that was both new and galling. That and his carelessness of the children together moved in me a kind of fury. I opened the door of the room, and motioned them out. They appeared to demur, Mr. Hewson especially ; but, certes, there is at times a touch of my father in me, and they could not help but yield to my will. They followed me out of the nursery, and I shut the door behind us.

"Now," said I, "I am ready to listen to you, if you will speak softly—not otherwise. Remember that to disturb the children may be their death !"

He began to launch forth into a homily upon my ill-behaviour and deservings. I stopped him with a gesture.

"I am as bad as you say, sir," said I. "Take that for granted, and come to the point. For every moment I am absent from my son at this crisis is an agony to me and a danger to him."

My father laid his hand heavily upon my shoulder.

"You thought otherwise this morning, it should seem," said he severely. "Doubtless you suppose us ignorant of the long interview you had——"

"But for which," I interrupted, "he had been dead ere this. Nay, sir, be pleased to hear the story of that from some one else or at another time, and come to what you deem it necessary to say, I beseech you."

"It is this, then," said Mr. Hewson. I cannot describe the impatience I felt to find him thrust in his word again and again between my father and me. "We are not ignorant of your impiety, Mrs. Hamilton, nor of the presumption wherewith you will ever choose your own path instead of following that which wiser heads would have you walk in. You have chosen to withdraw yourself from the service of your God ever since He hath touched you with His rod—nay, never deny it ; 'tis nothing but rebellion against His chastening, and that at the very moment when you ought most humbly to bow yourself to it and confess its justice. Your father hath now determined, in his wisdom, that whilst you remain in his house you shall no longer neglect the service of God."

"Nay, nay, sir," said I, turning to my father; "is not His work His service?—or can any duty of worship come before care of the lives that He hath given us charge of?"

My imperious mood was over, and I was fallen to pleading. They heeded it less than the other.

"Is it beyond His power, think you, to have a care of them while you are absent?" quoth my father sternly.

"Say, rather," broke in Mr. Hewson once more, "hath it not been the error of the city from the first, to endeavour that by our own strength which God had doubtless effected by His had we left it in His hand? Is not that the sin that hath brought this heavy chastisement upon us? 'Tis nothing but the tolerance that hath been shown to those that have never taken the Covenant that hath delayed our salvation. Had every one of them been forbidden to draw sword in our defence (as from the first I urged), no doubt but the Lord of Hosts, to whom it is as easy to save by few as by many, had owned our cause ere now in giving us the victory."

"You are right, sir, I believe and confess," quoth Mr. Murray. "And it is an error," he continued, turning to me, "that I will not permit scope to in my house. I would not be too sudden with you, knowing the hardness of the natural heart; but if you do not appear at the exercise to-morrow evening—being the evening of the Lord's Day—you shall leave my house next morning, and I will never look at you nor speak to you again. Mr. Hewson is right—I have been too lax with you. I will be so no longer. You shall do the thing which is right, or else I will renounce you as my daughter."

'Twas a cruel sentence, and I thought not fit either to protest—which had been as useless as to blow against the wind—or to refuse. I was turning back into the sick room, when Mr. Hewson spoke to my father.

"Mrs. Murray had best hear it now as well, had she not?" quoth he to my father.

I turned back upon them, with my hand upon the latch.

"It cannot be," said I, "that you are about to require the same thing of Rosa?"

"Assuredly we are," quoth he, "and wherefore not, since it is the duty of one of you as much as the other?"

"Not both at the same time, surely?" I said, amazed.

"Nay, but certainly," he replied. "'Tis borne in upon me

that the city's sin is the sin of faithlessness ; and in one house at least, the Most High shall see confidence shown in His power. Send Rosa to me, since I may not open my mouth in the room."

"Do me one favour, sir," said I. "Let me tell her this myself."

"Will you do it? and that without trying to influence her?" asked my father searchingly.

"Can she if she would?" asked Mr. Hewson.

"I both can and will, if you will trust me," said I.

For I knew that I could a little break the harshness of the order in the telling; shocking as it must be, however conveyed, it would come, I knew, less shockingly from my lips than from theirs; and to my thankfulness, my father gave me leave to be his mouthpiece.

I stood for a moment at the closed door, gathering my wits together and watching Mr. Murray and Mr. Hewson as they turned away. My father tottered at the stair-head, and caught his companion's arm to steady himself. Fasting had greatly broken his strength, but it was not altogether that. The duty (as he thought it) that was like to cost his children so dear, it was no little thing to himself to enforce. At the time I scarce marked it, being half enraged and half stupefied at his severity; but I thought of it later.

"Will she do it, think you?" asked Mr. Hewson, as they set foot on the landing beneath us.

"My daughter, sir, hath at least the pagan virtue of truth," returned Mr. Murray a little angrily.

I told Rosa—that same pagan virtue compelling me—every word they had said, without a word of commentary of mine own. She took it with greater composure than I looked for, and then I thought I had my reward for my promise.

"What are you going to do, Mary?" she asked me after a time.

"My dear," said I, "how can I tell you, since I have promised to say nothing that can influence you in your decision?"

She smiled very faintly, but for all its shadowy cloudiness her smile was not devoid of mirth.

"Ever the same old Mary," said she. "As if your doings could not fail to determine mine! My dear," she continued, after a little pause, "this is a matter wherein each of us must judge for herself; there's no escape. No, it's not for guidance; but I own I'd like to know what you mean to do."

"Then, I am sure you have no need to ask," said I. "But I am grown such a coward, Rosa, that I'd give almost anything to avoid the necessity of angering my father."

Many a time during that weary night it seemed, indeed, as though there should after all be no clashing of duties. So spent were the children that it seemed scarce possible they should live through another day. But towards the morning I thought I perceived a change that was not for the worse. Surely there was a lifting of the cloud upon the eyes; surely the skin was scarce so burning hot, nor the lips so parched. I was about to point it out to Rosa, when I saw that she was fallen upon her knees beside her son's cot. There was a lassitude about her posture that made me fear she had swooned again, and I approached her with a low cry. But she put forth her hand and motioned me back, and upon that I knew what ailed her. It was in perplexity of spirit she had cast herself down so helplessly; it was for light she was wrestling. I bent my head and joined my prayers to hers that she might find the things she sought.

The next moment my glance was drawn away from her kneeling form by a ray that sparkled through the window, and looking out, I saw again that glorious star that had so heartened me upon another tempestuous morning. This time also it shone among wreaths of sun-gilt cloud, and this time also it sent a ray of light into the mind as well as the eye. Should I chafe at her pain if the way to life lay through it?

That I ought not, I knew very well. Alas! 'tis one thing to perceive the right temper, and another thing altogether to have it.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE LAST SUNDAY.

PURE and softly dawned the Sabbath morning over the ruined city. 'Tis a marvellous thought, indeed, how small a distance the din of our noisiest fighting, or the dust of our stormiest, doth reach. The sky bent as blue and as mild above us as though there were never a thought in the world but of peace. Not upon the city's founding could the sun have shone more sweetly. But what a wreck of a town it was that lay beneath his rays! Scarce a house in it but was like to tumble down about the ears of the wretched scarecrows that went out and in; not a street but was ploughed up to the likeness of a field ready to be sowed. Ruined as it was, however, it was as much our own as on the day of the closing of the gates; and the walls were the only thing in the place that were as strong as ever, except the people's hearts.

Hour by hour the morning wore away, and with every hour the change in the condition of the children became more evident. Certainly they were quieter—certainly they seemed to be dropping into a natural slumber, far different from the fevered and tormented doze in which the last four days had passed; but hope was grown so great a stranger to our minds that we could not quite dismiss fear to make room for the more welcome occupant. Our hearts would still misgive us, lest this good quietness and rest should be nothing but the beginning of the end.

Towards ten o'clock we had a visitor (of whom it were hard to say whether he were more unexpected or more welcome) in the person of Dr. Aicken, who had never been near us since the day we forbade him to let blood from the children.

"I am but a messenger," said he, as he came into the room.

But we did so beseech him to look at the children and tell us what we should think of their state that he was fain to pardon us for our obstinacy and do as we desired. He touched them with that nicety of care that it seemed as though he feared they should come to pieces under his hands ; then he led us to the furthest window, and spoke to us there in a whisper.

"They're at the turn," said he. "I think they are falling asleep, and if you can preserve them from disturbance, they may do well yet ; 'tis little less than a miracle if they do. I'll look at them again when I am rid of my message."

With that he pulled a parcel from his pocket, and began to unwrap it. Judge of our surprise when it proved to be a little piece of beef !

"From my Lord Netterville," said he—"part of an unexpected ration that came to him yesterday."

"But why has he sent it to us ?" I inquired.

"He has often been making inquiry about you," said the doctor, "wondering, doubtless, why you never went to see him ; and he was much distressed to hear of the children's illness. I think, too, that he was casting about for some means of showing his gratitude to you for your many kindnesses."

"And so he sent us this," said I. "I protest that nothing I ever did for him was worth the half of it, for it will be of use to them, will it not ?" And with that I pointed to the cots.

"Yes ; the broth of it, once or twice perhaps," said the doctor, "if they wake, as I hope they will, clear of the fever. What have you to give them when this is spent—brandy ? good wine ?"

"Nothing at all," we were forced to answer him.

He went on tip-toe across the room, and looked long and carefully at the children.

"I think they are going to do well," said he, after his scrutiny. "Keep up your hearts ; since the immediate need is provided for, why doubt but that the next will be supplied in its turn ? There must, sure, be *some* wine in the town that may be procured for money—if one knew now but the likeliest place to look for it," he ended, in a musing tone of voice.

Presently after that he took his leave, giving us over again the two straight charges, to preserve the patients by all means from disturbance, and to have strong broth ready to give them the moment they woke of themselves. Our hearts began forthwith to ring the changes from gratitude to anxious care and back again.

Supposing their feet to be once planted on the road to recovery, where should we get the nourishing food that would be needed to confirm them therein, more especially in its first steep steps? 'Twas very well for him to bid us keep up our hearts, but, like many another thing that wisdom would advise, it was easier said than done.

In spite of that perplexity, gratitude had far the upper hand as we stood together watching them, noting how from minute to minute their sleep grew sounder and their breathing quieter.

Rosa clung to my shoulder, hiding her face beside my cheek and by some sympathetic insight I had warning that it was not merely thankfulness which kept her clinging there. She had something to say to me; I partly guessed what it should be by her hesitancy; and thinking to help her in her difficulty, I put the question.

"You are longing to tell me that you've made up your mind about—my father's command—are you not?" I whispered.

Her "Yes" was so very faint and tremulous that there was no need to ask what her determination was; in truth, her hesitation had told me already, and I said so.

"Do you think me a very paltry traitor, Mary," she asked, for answer, "to desert you in the hour of our common trouble?"

"Still the same old Rosa!" said I, borrowing her saying of the evening before. "I did not think I was so masterful that you should suppose me unable to understand how friends may be of different minds."

"Now you are angry," said she, looking piteously into my face.

"Angry? No, indeed," I said. "Perhaps a little grieved to find that you do not know me better." And with that I drew her to my side again, and kissed her.

We were both as weak as water, and at my kiss a tear or two gathered in Rosa's eyes and trickled down her cheeks. She took no heed of them, but looked me in the eyes in spite of them, straight and tenderly. It brought me in mind of her behaviour on the day of Wamphray's death.

"Mary," said she, and face and voice together were persuasion itself, "dear, dearest Mary, see what a great mercy God hath granted us in giving us back our children's lives! At least, it seems very likely that He hath given them back to us." With that her eyes rested lovingly upon their faces, and mine did follow them. "Sure, some extraordinary expression of our gratitude is

no more than our plain duty," said she. "'Tis a miracle that hath been wrought for us, as the doctor told us ;—no less." Then all of a sudden she came to the point. "Dear Mary, could not you show yours by putting aside your own will for once, and complying with your father's desire?"

I put mine arm around her, and held her close—my dear, dear sister, and dearer now than ever, since 'twas no light thing for her to speak to me with any plainness of censure. And with her heart beating against mine arm, I reviewed mine own decision, to try if I could think I had misconceived my duty, or could find any loophole of escape from its compulsion. But more than ever did it seem the chief of it to be with my child at the critical moment ; to watch for that, lest by any oversight I should miss it ; to make sure that nothing was neglected which was expedient to be done. And yet—who could tell?—the critical moment might by the evening be happily past. Or my father might be disposed, if the thing were wisely represented to him, to allow us a substitute we could trust—Margery, say, or Annot. I would do what in me lay, and so I promised to my sister.

Accordingly, when Margery came to us next, I sent her to desire that Mr. Murray would speak with us—for on this morning he had never come near us—and put the thing before him as persuasively as I could.

At first I thought he would have let himself be prevailed upon, for he put his hand to his head and mused awhile. And when he spoke his voice was so gentle that I could scarce credit the sternness of his determination.

"You mistake my meaning, and that utterly," said he. "It is not to break down your will that I desire, but to make it evident that faith in God's almighty power and goodness is not utterly dead in the city—no, nor yet His acceptable worship according to His revealed will. How should this be attained, if when you left your children you set another to watch them in your place? Or why should you fear to leave them in that care alone that is the sole security of any life in the world?"

"It's all the same to me," I answered sadly, "as if a sentinel should plead his confidence in his general in excuse for deserting the post he had been set to watch."

After that I said no more to Rosa, nor she to me, about the matter. For, indeed, there was nothing more to be said. *My* course, at least, was plain.

Scarcely had Mr. Murray turned his back, when there broke out a noise of distant firing of great guns. 'Twas a thing we were very well accustomed to, and was wont to be followed shortly by the noise of firing near at hand. And that—the thought flashed instantly across our minds—would be a danger to the children, because it was nigh certain to wake them up. We made haste to close the windows, and shutter the under part; the upper we could not, since never a candle had we to light the sick-room withal. Tallow was grown far too precious to be burnt. Quick as we were with our shuttering, the streets were already beginning to be filled with people hurrying to the walls—people whose faces were drawn and wild with an eagerness that was keen to very torture. What could it mean? we asked each other, pausing in our task the while. What could it mean save one thing? And the firing, too, came from the direction of the Lough.

"Best not to think of it," we cautioned each other, "lest it prove, after all, no more than a fresh attack from a new quarter."

But, in spite of prudence, Rosa's eyes began to glisten with anxiety—the match of that which deformed the townsfolk's faces—and mine did burn in their sockets like live coals.

Hotter and hotter grew the distant firing, and next it was succeeded by a long and sickening pause. Margery, who had been slipping in and out all morning as quietly as any cat, came in now somewhat abruptly, so that I reproved her.

"Oh, madam," said she, in a choking whisper, "the ships!—the ships at last! They are at Culmore; they're about to attempt the passage of the river."

'Twas confirmation of our hopes—if that be rightly called hope which hath more than the torment of fear. But what should cause the silence that now prevailed?

Even as we wondered, the noise of firing broke out afresh, nearer to the city than at first, and louder. The children seemed to stir at the sound, and therefore I bade muffle every chink and cranny, if perhaps we might preserve them from disturbance. But, muffle as we might, we could not shut out the rattling and shaking of the volleys, nor the wild shouting that accompanied them. And these were noises that did set my heart thrumming in mine ears, and my joints loose from each other, as though I had the palsy. Rosa was worse than I, for again she swooned quite away; and being recovered from that with no little difficulty,

she fell into a fit of sobbing and crying that was near as painful and exhausting. Neither hunger nor weariness had so broken us down as this first glimpse of authentic hope.

'Twas bootless to warn ourselves and each other that they might fail. We knew it well. But for all that we sat trembling and quivering with expectancy, after a fashion that drained the strength as a wound doth drain the blood. And through all the distant riot the children slept motionless and peacefully.

After a time the firing ceased altogether, the shouting died away, there ensued a silence like that of midnight. We listened long, expecting it to recommence as before; but it did not. And then we fell into a calenture of wondering what the silence meant. A successful attempt had assuredly been greeted with shouts (however hoarse and weak) of acclamation; a repulse had as certainly excited wailing so keen that some sound of it must have penetrated to our ears. How could we interpret this silence following the noise of battle? Never a soul seemed like to come near us again to tell us.

Presently the children stirred in their cots, as though toward their waking, and then they quieted again. We were bending over them with every nerve upon the stretch, when Margery came to summon us to the exercise. Her eyes seemed starting from her head, and her face was of a livid grayness that was awful to look at.

"How we are to sit through it, madam, sure I know not!" quoth she. "For I can't hear anything at the windows below; there's not a soul passing to ask news of; and the master hath straitly forbidden us to go out and seek it. Whether the ships be taken or be at the quay, I know not."

"Nay, now, Margery," quoth Rosa, "never fear but you'll know all that in good time. But oh, Mary!" she cried, "how am I to sit through it, not knowing whether my son needs me or not?"

"What you would do for him yourself," I said to her, "I'll do. Do not fret, dear Rosa; sure, you can leave him in my charge without fear."

"But I shall not know," said she, "whether he wakes to life or to death."

"Must you go down?" said I, unable to keep silence any more. "Sure, you'll never be able to force your mind to prayer, amidst so many and strong distractions."

"There you are mistaken indeed," quoth she. "It's in prayer, and prayer alone, that I shall find strength and patience to do my duty."

With that she gave me one kiss, and turned away. But so spent was she, that she could scarce set one foot before another; so that Margery had to support her, as though she had been a very aged woman. My whole soul melted with pity for her. To me it appeared a rendering of adulation instead of obedience—this duty, as they deemed it, of service to God. I thought it a turning of the back upon the service He had appointed us to. And I scarce could govern mine indignation at the thought that such hard service had been required of her, until I remembered that her whole mind had consented thereto. After that I found myself murmuring words that now came easily and often to my lips:

"O sanctâ simplicitas!"

CHAPTER L.

LIFE, AND TRUTH, AND VICTORY.

AND now again the streets began to echo to the steps and voices of passers-by—steps that surely went brisker and stronger than an hour or two before; voices that had a sound of triumph beneath their husky feebleness. Were we saved indeed? I began to quiver at the thought, and longed to throw up the window and inquire; but that, of course, was out of the question.

The noise of the voices in the room below jarred upon me sorely. 'Twas, sure, a kind of devotion that went beside the mark, as if, when Moses bade the children of Israel to "stand still and see the salvation of God," some of them had closed their eyes and betaken them to their individual prayers. And yet to do as they were doing was costing some of them dear.

Some of them? I thought next—nay, not some, but all of them. None of them could close their ears to the passing steps, the voices—perhaps even they could hear the very words. Not one of them but had rejoiced to be out among his fellow-citizens had they but been able to think it right. My father, too—it would be no light thing for him to turn me from his house with my child at the risk of that child's life, perhaps the sacrifice thereof. But that he would be as sharp as his word, I knew, alas! too well. I wished truly that it had been possible for me to avoid opposing him; but even as the thought traversed my mind I had cause to give thanks to God that I had done as I had done.

For there came a sound of stirring from Roland's cot that deafened mine ears to all the others—ay, and would have done so *had* Roaring Meg herself been adding her voice to the din. I

went to him as quick and as softly as ever I could, and was in time to see his sweet eyes open. He looked up at me with a faint smile; he knew me again. I never so much as cast a thought to Derry and its fate for a minute or two after that. Nor shall I ever forget the pleasure—keen even to tears—that it gave me to feed him with the broth which had been waiting his wakening for hours, and which I had not had to give him except for the bounty of an enemy. The child had no sooner swallowed it than he slipped off to sleep again with one whispered word upon his lips that went near to break my heart with gratitude.

After that I wished that James would continue to sleep until his mother should be by his side, grudging at the thought that she should be deprived of so sweet a pleasure. But a minute or two later he woke with a little cry that startled me; Roland's waking had been so peaceful. But his eyes were as sane as his cousin's, and his skin as moist and cool; and I soothed him and fed him with equal tenderness. After that I was calming him to sleep again, when of a sudden he opened his eyes and cried out for his mother—a faint little cry, indeed, that I thought could scarce have been heard by any that was not bending over him as I was. But who can tell how keen are a mother's senses?

I looked him in the eyes, and told him she should come to him anon, and he was quieted and went to sleep; but I was troubled in mind, thinking his awaking less favourable than Roland's. But ever as he slept he grew the quieter; till, as the time wore on for the exercise to be finished, there was not a pin to choose between the sleep of the two children for restfulness.

And now, my mind being turned that way, my attention centred itself every minute more intensely on the voices in the room below, and it did verily seem to me that Mr. Hewson was never like to bring his exhortation—or his supplication, which was it?—to an end. Weary as I was, my chafing would not let me be still; and I went to and fro in the room marvelling at him and grieving for Rosa. Sure, what had he to do to torment her? Was it the man's natural perversity that made him keep them twice as long as usual, because he knew that every soul of them was longing to be free? I had begun to think better of him, and I felt disappointed.

All of a sudden—my pain for Rosa, I think, being my teacher—I understood. It was his duty, or so he thought it. In this house alone were to be found the five righteous persons that

should avert the wrath of God from the reprobate city. Doubtless he felt himself another Abraham, able by his prayers to move the Almighty to repeal its sentence. "O sancta simplicitas!" I thought again, with a mood of mind that balanced itself between tears and laughter.

At last, at last, I heard the door open in the room below, but softly even to stealth. Then, sure enough, came steps upon the stair; but when I hastened to meet the new-comer, it was not Rosa, but Margery.

"What hinders her? What keeps her from her child?" said I impatiently, when Margery had seen and gloated over the children.

"I know not, madam," replied she. "She was still on her knees when I quitted the room. 'Tis true that we went softly, but I did not think she marked Mr. Hewson's amen either."

It did touch me with awe to think of devotion so absolute and at such a moment; but five minutes later I could find it in my thoughts to blame it, thinking it more than a little heartless. And yet—Rosa heartless? That could hardly be.

A few moments later, and I know not what impatient fretfulness caught at my heart; I could wait no longer for the conclusion of her prayer.

"Go to her," I said to Margery—"go to her quickly. It is not natural, this delay. Perhaps it is my father that is detaining her. Go to her, and tell her that her son lives, and is like to live; and bring her to him; quickly, good Margery."

She went as I had bidden her, but presently returned alone.

"She hath not risen from her knees," said she. "And, oh, madam, who am I to disturb her? 'Tis a thing I dare not do."

Fear took hold upon me at her words, and yet I knew not why; my speech went nigh to failing me.

"Look you to the children," said I to Margery, with a husky voice, and went down the stair as quick as I could for the trembling that had smitten me in every limb.

It was nothing lessened as I came into the room below, though there appeared nothing there to justify it. The twilight was deepening fast, so that Rosa and my father were scarce visible in the dusky room. Mr. Hewson was there no longer. My father was still seated at the table, with his head propped upon his hand like a man sunk in thought. Rosa was on her knees beside a chair; the attitude was scarce the ordinary one, for she had sunk backward very far. Her arms were stretched out straight before

her; the hands locked together; the face hidden between the arms. 'Twas a kind of ecstasy—a rapture of supplication. I marvelled no longer that Margery did not dare approach her. Here was nothing frightful, and yet, as I am a living woman, the hair of my flesh crisped itself and stood erect, as though I saw a spirit.

I went softly across the room to my father's side. He looked at me with reproach in his eyes; he said not a word to me, but only lifted his hand to enjoin silence upon me. But 'twas out of my power to keep silence.

"What is wrong?" I asked him in a whisper. "Why is she so long upon her knees?"

"I desire you will not disturb her," said he, whispering also. "Perhaps it is for you she prays; you have need of it."

At that I would have left the room as quietly as I had entered it; but there was an oppression at my heart that would not let me, and yet I knew not what I feared. Only I could not bear to leave Rosa without assuring myself that all was well with her; and therefore, disregarding my father's gesture of prohibition, I crossed the room and sank down softly on my knees at her side. That, I thought, could scarce interrupt her devotion; nor did she stir to give me place.

Then at last I ventured to lay my hand upon her arm, and at that touch I knew all, though I strove to think she had but swooned again. Alas! the first sight of the set and rigid face was enough, and not for me alone, but for my father too, who hastened to mine aid when he saw me trying to lay her down. He sent forth a cry so terrible that it might well have broken her rest.

"I have killed my daughter—I have killed my daughter!"

Alas! it was too true. The thing she had set herself to do was beyond her strength. Even as the martyrs' flesh was consumed in the fire wherefrom their resolute will forbade it to shrink, so in the ordeal she deemed to be required of her did her enfeebled frame fall away from the unflinching spirit, setting it free.

All the world seemed to reel away from me like a mist, as we tried without avail every means to revive her. My father fell into a fit of trembling and weeping that was infinitely pitiful. And outside the whole city rang with shouting voices that proclaimed our victory. "Victory and abundance!" they cried. "Victory! victory and deliverance!"

I stooped and kissed my sister's cheek, bethinking me how bodily feebleness and mother-love had combined in vain to turn her from the path—straight and steep as could be found—she had resolved to tread.

"Victory!" I whispered in the deafened ear—"victory and deliverance!"

Then I rose—to find myself safe within my husband's arm, and sheltered next his heart.

When the first half-conscious moments were past, when the triumphant shouts without began again to have some significance in mine ears, 'twas not the glory of our victory that was present in my mind, nor even the inestimable gains that were purchased thereby, but the cost of it. For of those that had taken arms so resolutely in defence of faith and freedom, not half, nor near it, remained to rejoice in the good issue. Not half, nor near it! The rest were but the stepping-stones whereon we had crossed the flood. Our salvation had been paid for with many and many a life.

Take but our own family as an instance—and it was no more, for there was scarce a house in Derry but had suffered as sorely. My brother gone in the prime of his manhood; his wife dead of grief and privation in the very moment of the Relief; their son saved by a miracle, like mine own; Adam wounded, and that so sorely that as yet it was impossible to tell whether he would ever rise from the bed of pain and danger on which he was lying; his father's fate unknown, for never since the day of the driving of the Protestants to the walls had we heard a word of his welfare, and we feared the worst. I leant upon my husband's shoulder and thought of all these things. As I thought, mine eyes fell upon my father and I wondered if there were not another calamity to add to all the rest.

For he knelt motionless, and like to a man stricken senseless, beside Rosa's body.

"My work—my work!" he murmured brokenly, "I was—to blame."

The happy tumult in the street passed clean by him. His ears were deaf to the sounds of it; his mind was closed to the thought of it. The bitter pain in his face drew me to his side like a cord. I cast myself on my knees beside him, pressing close to his side, stroking his hands and kissing them, murmuring words of comfort into his ears, that would not listen to nor mark them.

"My work—my work!" he babbled still. "I should not have forced her—I should not have forced her."

"Nay, nay, sir; 'twas not you that forced her," I cried to him; and at that, for the first time, he began to listen to what I said. "It was not you, but her own conscience, that compelled her to do as she did," I repeated. "I know it, for was not I with her all the day? I cannot blame you," I continued, thankful that I had so learnt to comprehend him as to be able to speak comfort to him. "I cannot blame you; for well I know that what you did, your own conscience exacted it of you. You had no choice, dearest father; you could not do but as you thought it your duty. I knew that well, all the time."

"She is right, sir," said Captain Hamilton, very low but very solemnly. "You must not blame yourself; for this is the act of the Almighty, and none of yours. He hath dealt very mercifully with Rosa."

"Mercifully!" repeated my father, looking up with his ghastly face.

"Mercifully—yes, most mercifully," returned my husband. "For she is spared the hearing of that which had assuredly broken her heart, had she lived to learn it."

"It is her brother that is dead, too," said I.

"Yes," he answered—"dead in the moment of his triumph. It is to him chiefly that the victory is due; it was his ship that led the squadron that hath gained the city. 'Twas at the moment that his ship, the *Mountjoy*, broke through the boom that he fell, shot through the heart. He paid with his life for the Relief that he hath toiled for weeks to bring about."

"Are you sure of this?" I asked him.

"Sure? Yes, sure enough," he replied. "Wasn't I by his side?—I and poor young Seys, that is wounded, too, though I hope not seriously. 'Twas after the *Mountjoy* grounded, for you shall know that she went not through the boom at the first shock, though she started it all to pieces. The shock sent her aground, and then they thought they had her. But Browning bade fire a broadside at them. The recoil from that sent her back into the channel; and then she sailed through the breach she had made in the boom, after the *Phœnix*, that had passed it while she was engaged with the Irish. 'Twas at the very moment of passing that one of the Irish marksmen took him off. He fell just at my feet. He was pointing with his sword—so" ('twas the very

gesture I remembered so well)—“and the flash of the steel no doubt guided the man's eye as he aimed. Strange, that not a man of us was touched (though the bullets were rattling about our ears like hail) till the work was accomplished. And at that very moment a chance shot—almost the very last they fired, indeed—carried off him that was the soul of the whole enterprise.”

“How was that, I pray you?” said I.

“Why, but for Browning,” said he, “there had been no Relief to-day, nor ever at all, for aught I can see. He was with Kirke at his first coming; and when nothing would bring him to the point of attempting the river, Browning turned clean about and sailed for England. There he and Cairns sought out Schomberg, saw the King himself, I believe, and returned with a positive command that the relief was to be attempted without delay, whatever the difficulties or the risk. Many a man hath been at Kirke to the same end since Browning sailed, but without effect; but Cairns, that Browning brought over, brought orders that he could no longer disregard.”

“So 'tis to Browning chiefly that this day's success is due?” said I.

“To him more than to all the rest together,” returned Captain Hamilton. “Leake said so, Rooke said so. But for him they would scarce have had the opportunity to make the attempt. He hath toiled like a hero to gain his end. And oh, Mary! when one recalls the efforts he made to effect the relief of the city, and thinks of his life taken at the very instant when that was assured, hath it not the look of a payment made for the accomplishment of a chosen object?”

“If it were so indeed,” I answered, “well I know that 'tis a payment he had never grudged. And it is very fit that you have told us of his triumph and his martyrdom—for 'tis that, and no less—here upon the scene of his sister's. Yes, you are right. The Almighty hath dealt very mercifully with them both.” And I stooped and kissed my father's shaking hand, that was but an instrument in the hand of his God.

O sancta simplicitas!

Which of the three deserved a poorer meed of praise?

This my narrative hath lain by for months, and to-day I take it up again to add some short account of a scene which completes it with a fitting epilogue.

For our long strife and trial hath now had a further reward than victory ; it hath met with recognition from that quarter whence recognition is at once most gracious and most due. The King himself hath been in Derry ; a wizen, undistinguished little man, with nothing in his aspect to proclaim him the descendant of a line of illustrious soldiers, and himself the most illustrious of them all. Save when you may meet the glance of his eye—that, however transient, hath the power of the veritable hero's—penetrating at once and steadfast, it doth subdue the will to obedience and the heart to loyal confidence. 'Tis a look I learnt to know two years ago. I recognised it to-day, and shrank not from it, but rejoiced in it.

The King hath been in Derry, and I have seen him ; and so hath Captain Hamilton, who now is simple James Hamilton no longer, but hath a handle to his name. Credit me, it was the proudest moment that ever I knew when the King began to tell me, in the hearing of all my friends, of my husband's faithful services, and his own sense of the same, and in particular of a secret mission to the Low Countries that was entrusted to him in the spring of last year, wherein his discretion and secrecy shone as conspicuous as his fidelity and courage.

"And since I haf learnt from Hamilton," said the King, in his slow foreign manner of speech, "that the secrecy he was forced to obserf did cause you much pain, I haf delayed to reward him according to his deserts until I hat the opportunity to do it in your presence."

With that he desired Captain Hamilton to kneel, and dubbed him knight upon the spot. Judge if I was overpaid for my grief ! Judge if I was rebuked for my mistrust of my husband !

His Majesty was gracious indeed to me, but to Mrs. Browning he was gracious and something more. When she bent and kissed his hand, he raised her up and saluted her upon the cheek. Then with his own hands he tied a diamond necklace about her neck, in grateful remembrance, he told her, of her husband's services to him, to his country, and to the Protestant cause throughout the world.

"Services," said he, "impossible to be estimated. Hat Derry fallen, no doubt but King James hat remaindt King of Ireland. France and his frients in Scotland helping him, it is possible he might haf regained England. And in that case, the Protestant cause had been doubtful, indeed in Europe. Under God, madam,

'tis greatly to your husband's devotion that its prosperity to-day is due."

Therewith he clasped the ornament upon her shoulder. And sure, next to the consolation of the knowledge that her husband accomplished that end for which he staked his life and paid it, comes that of the knowledge that his devotion is seen according to its perfectness by one that can esteem it at its proper worth.

What was that he had said to his sister and me, on the day after Captain Hamilton's escape from Cloncall, of his hopes of serving that cause?

"A few more cargoes safely brought to hand—a passenger or a message taken where they be required;—that is the limit of the likelihood." And, "If there be greater service appointed for me, doubtless it will find me where I am."

"Why, yes; that was all, indeed. But that cargo brought in, that message carried, the King he loved did now pronounce to have been the pivot whereon did turn the liberty of his country and the triumph of his faith.

Such, and no smaller, was the service he paid.

Well, the dusk is falling, and with the dusk the dew. 'Tis time the children were brought into the house. Even as I form the thought in my mind, I hear their voices replying to Margery's call. They have been about some marvellous delightful labour, in charge of Joshua Hill, the same man whose fish was, by God's mercy, I nothing doubt, the saving of their lives. He hath been in our employment since the day we returned to Cloncall; a man bereaved and homeless, he hath centred his affection upon the children whom he helped to save. They return it with interest, and their loving prattle doth often beguile him from his sadness. To see them now, one might almost think he had forgotten his own children and their mother, buried under the great green mound in Derry churchyard.

But I know better. When I go to that place, to visit the graves of those whom I loved, and love, but shall not see until my body be laid beside theirs, very oft I take him with me. 'Tis in loving remembrance more than in grieving that we pass our time, as knowing that those we think of have entered into that blessedness which hath neither term nor limit, and for which their suffering here was no more than a preparation, brief, though sharp. And

in the presence of these memories we are equals again, as we were in the streets of Derry—equals in the sorrow that shall ere long be swallowed up in the joy of reunion ; equals, too, in the hope that endures, and shall that day be justified.

THE END.

THE VERDICT OF THE PRESS

ON

"A MAN'S FOES."

The **DAILY CHRONICLE**, *September 30th*, says: "'A Man's Foes' is the best historical novel, pure and simple, that we have had since Mr. Conan Doyle published 'Micah Clarke.' . . . One of the most picturesque, dramatic, and absorbing historical romances we have read for many a long day. . . . An author whose invention, imagination, pictorial vision, and fine literary skill, have harmoniously co-operated in the production of an exceptionally fine romance."

The **SKETCH**, *November 9th*, says: "Quite the best historical novel of the day. . . . 'A Man's Foes' is something much better than a mere historical novel; it is a novel of character. There is a fine ethical grandeur in the book. . . . The reading of it braces one like a tonic."

The **SPECTATOR**, *October 19th*, says: "We can remember hardly any novel in which a series of stirring incidents is rendered with more impressive veracity of broad effect, and in which, at the same time, single characters or episodes stand out with more arresting saliency. The escape of Hamilton from Clonally, the defence of the beleaguered house, the adventurous sally of Mrs. Hamilton from the city surrounded by its foes, the episodes of terrible privation and heroic endurance, all fascinate the imagination and linger in the memory; but the whole is really finer than any of the parts. . . . The ranks of English living novelists have received a valuable accession."

The **DAILY TELEGRAPH**, *September 13th*, says: "If E. H. Strain, the author of 'A Man's Foes,' be a lady, she may be cordially congratulated on having written a powerful and impressive historical novel; if a gentleman, upon a rare gift of insight into the more recondite depth of feminine character, and on a remarkable capacity for composing vivid and thrilling narrative in an excellent literary style. The story she or he tells with masterly skill is that of the memorable defence of Derry by an extemporised garrison of Ulster Protestants. . . . A chronicle of intense and unflagging interest."

The Verdict of the Press—continued.

MR. A. B. WALKLEY says: "A new and very remarkable novel by E. H. Strain, I have no hesitation in saying, is one of the finest historical novels we have had for years. It is a book that will live; forcible and stirring, yet weighty and sober; brisk and cheerful, yet so deeply pathetic as scarce to be read without tears. . . . Everybody will be reading this book, and its author is bound to become famous. . . . The working of the woman's mind is laid bare to us, and, as it were, every beat of her heart, so that we live through the siege with her. . . . A masterpiece in this sort of historical reconstruction. Surely Scott's 'Covenanters'—yes, I will say it, though it may sound extravagant praise—were not better done. And there are minor characters—an old Scotch gardener, a wild Irish lad—that, I dare to think, Sir Walter would not be ashamed of either. . . . Take up 'A Man's Foes,' and I defy you to lay it down until you have finished it. And I am much mistaken if you do not feel a better man for the reading of it."

The **NEW AGE**, *October 10th*, says: "The one question, however, which the ordinary man in the street, or woman in the house, asks about a novel is not 'Does it possess this or that quality which is admired by superfine critics?' but, 'Is it a story which is likely to interest me?' and this is a question which can be answered with no uncertain sound. 'A Man's Foes' is not merely interesting; it is so absorbing that if a reader takes it up at a time when some duty imperatively calls him, it is likely to have a perfectly demoralising effect."

The **ATHENÆUM**, *October 19th*, says: "A combination of good sense and womanliness, which reminds us of such a good diarist as Lucy Hamilton. . . . The old Scotch gardener is not historic, as far as we know, but is none the less one of the many true types of character for which we are indebted to the author."

The **ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE**, *October 28th*, says: "Those who repay the very careful labour that has been bestowed on the making of this story by reading it as carefully as it is written, will seem to be in the very thick of the events treated of, and will be well repaid for their pains; for a more thoroughly truth-like narration and skilfully worked up environment could not be imagined."

The **SUN**, *October 9th*, says: "There are critics who maintain that Mr. Strain is as good a workman as either Mr. Conan Doyle or Mr. Stanley Weyman. . . . We have here a name with which the future will have to reckon."

WARD, LOCK & BOWDEN, LIMITED, *London, New York and Melbourne.*

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